

✓
FATAL FOLLIES:

OR, THE K

H I S T O R Y

OF THE

COUNTESS OF STANMORE.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

L O N D O N :

**PRINTED FOR G. G. J. AND J. ROBINSON,
PATERNOSTER ROW.**

M DCC LXXXVIII.

FATAL FOLLIES:

OF THE

HISTORY

OF THE

COUNTRESS OF STANNMORE.



VOL. I.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR G. AND J. ROBINSON,

PATERNOSTER ROW.

1824.

FATAL FOLLIES:
OR,
THE HISTORY
OF THE
COUNTESS OF STANMORE.

WILLIAM OSSORY, Esq.

TO

GEORGE BEAUCHAMP, Esq.

Offory Place.

I AM infinitely sorry that my being out of town has hitherto prevented me from experiencing what I have always thought the sincerest felicity we are capable of enjoying; that of pressing to our breast a

VOL. I.

B

long

long absent and dear friend: yet I anticipate this pleasure, and hope to realize it in the course of a very few weeks. Were I in the situation now, in which I was when we parted, eighteen years ago, a few hours would be sufficient for this purpose, and save me the pain of thinking, that though you have returned, we have not yet seen each other. But being now a widower, as I believe I informed you in my last packet, I am engaged in superintending the education of my only child, about which I want your advice. She has youth, beauty, and an immense fortune. Her improvements were under the inspection of her amiable mother, until Providence thought fit to recall her to receive the reward of
her

her many virtues. Since that time, I have endeavoured to give Helena all the accomplishments necessary for my daughter and heiress. She is now at an age when it is proper that she should be introduced to the world, in order that she may there chuse an husband worthy of her. As fortune is not an object to her, I would wish she should attract the notice of our young nobility. Let them give her rank, and she shall bring a fortune to support it, however high they may be placed in the scale of life. Our family, you know, is antient and unexceptionable. I shall not insist on her marrying any one contrary to her own inclinations, as I have always consulted them, and never had reason to repent my having done so.

She is now sixteen, and I shall be very glad to find her making choice of a protector, as, by so doing, I shall not only be at liberty to retire again to my estate, and live for myself, but enjoy the hope of beholding, in a young race of smiling innocents, the offspring of no plebeian blood, the increase, the stability, and the glory of my family. To mean and poor people a numerous progeny, I cannot help thinking, must be a source of great uneasiness and suffering, as the commiseration of the parent accumulates, and presses down on his own head, the afflictions that overtake his unhappy offspring. But the man on whom Providence has not only bestowed an honourable line of ancestry, but also an affluent

ent fortune, by the multiplication of his family receives an increase of honour, and participates through sympathy in those joys from which the advancement of years would otherwise exclude him. Though he yield by degrees to the law of nature, and fall like ripe fruit into his mother's lap, yet, in a generation sprung from himself, he enjoys by anticipation a species of immortality, since there is no period to which he can look forward, so long as the laws and constitution of his country is preserved, in which he has not the satisfaction of viewing his offspring spreading wider and wider, like branches from a tree, of which he himself is the stem and the glory. I don't know whether it is not a

thing very displeasing, in the sight of Heaven, for men and women to give way to their natural inclinations towards each other, without the means of securing the happiness of their posterity. Of this, at least, I am certain, that it is the duty of parents, as well as their interest and honour, to improve whatever stock or patrimony they possess to the very utmost of their power. This duty, thank God, I have not neglected. My estate, which was reckoned great when it came into my hand, has by my care been nearly doubled; nor have I neglected to ensure the prosperity of my family by all other means in my power. For some years I have employed my time and thoughts in endeavours to bestow
on

on my daughter, such attractions as may conspire with her fortune to engage the affection and esteem of a worthy Lord. When introduced to your acquaintance, she will not, I hope, be thought an unamiable object. I speak with all the partiality of a parent: you will, I know, look on her with the eyes of a friend. She exhibits at present a few little caprices sometimes that displease me; but these, I doubt not, will be corrected by years and experience. As I think they are to blame who marry without fortune, so I condemn celibacy in those who have.—Pray, why are you returned a batchelor? Is it left for some of our British fair to accomplish what those of other climes have never been able to at-

chieve? I mean the conquest of your heart. Perhaps you left it in exchange for that of some other before you left us. I shall ask no more questions until we meet, and will now subscribe myself,

Yours faithfully,

WILLIAM OSSORY.

GEORGE BEAUCHAMP, Esq.

TO

WILLIAM OSSORY, Esq.

My Good Friend,

Upper Brook Street.

I THINK myself obliged by the sincere concern you express at your not being in town to receive me, and hope soon to take you by the hand.

The friends I left when I went abroad are all dispersed: some married, many dead, and others out of town; so that I am, though in my own, to all appearance in a strange country. Nay, this city is altered wonderfully, insomuch that

I could hardly find my way to my brother's, who has, in my absence, removed from the city to the West end of the town. When I arrived there, I made no less a mistake, than to address his wife for his eldest daughter: which, I found, did not at all displease her. It was no wonder that I fell into this error, for she is just the same age; and when my niece and she are together, she really appears the youngest of the two. As a batchelor I have no right to give my opinion on the subject of matrimony, otherwise I could give both you and my brother my sentiments on that head; and, I must say, I think you both in the wrong. I hope your daughter is possessed of more sense than yourself, and will not be attracted so much by

the

the Nobility, as by the personal merit of the man she makes choice of for her husband. Has she not a princely fortune? and that, managed rightly, will enable her to command what rank alone cannot; the nobility of the mind. Let her, amongst the croud of suitors she will have in her train, weigh their qualities and virtues, not their titles, and there are twenty chances to one against her becoming either a Dutches or a Countess: though, by giving a deserving man a place in her heart, and a share in her possessions, she may ensure to herself a great portion of happiness. But I will not go on in this strain, as I see you are of a different opinion from me. All my hopes are in your daughter: as we old fellows

do not so easily alter any fixed determination. Young people, as they shoot up, expand their ideas with their stature, and often change opinions. After a certain age, and having reviewed the world, we form our judgment, which serves as a standard for the rest of our lives. However, give my best compliments to the young lady, and tell her, if I was about five-and-twenty, in spite of all your opinions I would enter the lists, and contend for the prize with our proudest nobility; but as I am now an old man, I beg to be considered as the friend of her father; and if she will allow me a place in her esteem, I shall feel the honour as it deserves. I can say little yet of the town, or its news, as I have been engaged

engaged in unpacking trunks and other such matters incident to a recent arrival. I shall wait with impatience for our meeting, and remain

Your friend,

GEORGE BEAUCHAMP.

MISS LEICESTER

TO

MISS BEAUCHAMP.

Elm Wood.

MY amiable friend has long since received the melancholy intelligence of my loss of the best and most valuable of parents, which I communicated by the hand of my faithful Jenny, not being able myself to write on the subject. I now take the pen to thank you for two letters dictated by the warmth of the sincerest friendship. Alas! I know your situation, and lament it! was it otherwise I would seek an asylum in your friendly bosom, there pour out my sorrows, and consult what

what is best for me to do in the dreadful situation in which I now find myself. But the disposition of Mrs. Beauchamp forbids me to think of it. How cruel was it in your father to raise this insolent woman to a situation which will ever be a constant source of misery to his children? You, my dear, was of an age to have done the honours of his house, and to have also acquitted yourself of the duty of a daughter. Then, why endeavour to render you wretched by marrying a woman who had not a fortune to make marriage even an object of interest? However, I hope you will not long remain in her power. In the mean time, do not you, like fortune, desert your Matilda. For I find, on an enquiry into my dear father's

father's affairs, which, on his leaving me previously to his joining his regiment abroad, he had put in as good a train as possible, that I am not possessed of more than five hundred pounds. My poor father was obliged, as an officer, to spend all his little fortune in maintaining his rank, and on my education. Since I have returned from school he has seen much company. This he did, as he told me, when he clasped me to his breast at parting, to give me a chance, since he had not a fortune, of gaining a husband who had one; that he might die in peace, in seeing his Matilda provided for according to her merit. "Therefore," said he, "my dear child, should I fall by the chance of war, and you should find the

the small patrimony I have left less than your expectations, do not harbour a disadvantageous thought of your father, but submit to the laws, and place your reliance on the protection of that Providence which will support you under my loss, and every other difficulty into which your beauty, and inexperience might otherwise naturally involve you.

“ Your heart is tender, and I fear too susceptible ; therefore, take care, and be ever on your guard. A woman’s character is sullied, nay, lost, by the slightest suspicion. Always remember you are Colonel Leicester’s daughter, whose honour is dearer to him than life.” With much more advice to the same purpose, he bade me his last adieu
And

And though at that time my tears prevented me from making any reply; yet, every word is treasured up in my heart, and until that shall cease to vibrate, the advice of my parent will never be forgotten.

What am I to do? I have many friends, as they stile themselves, who have offered me their pity and advice, but none in the way that I approve. They have all spoke in the insolence of condolence, not the sympathy of tender friendship. It is for this balm to my mind that I apply to my dearest Honoria. Five hundred pounds will not support me in the character of a gentlewoman, and servitude my spirit can hardly brook. This place renders me doubly wretched. I can scarcely cast my eye on any part of the
room

room where the idea of my parent does not present itself: his books, his drawings, his dogs, and more particularly his favourite horse, who grazes in a paddock opposite to my window. This creature had often carried him, on the occasion of reviews, and the field of battle; but growing old he was left at home, and now seems to look at me and demand his master. These objects are to me a continual source of sorrow; therefore, as soon as possible, I will quit this once dear scene for others, to which I cannot look forward without many apprehensions. Give me a letter soon, and excuse me now, as I must prepare for a visit from Mr. and Miss Ossory, the great heiress, who are my neighbours, and of course

course come in the pomp of riches to pity the poor Matilda! However, they must be received. Therefore, adieu! my only friend, whose heart harbours none but benevolent and tender sentiments; may peace ever be your attendant whatever fate befalls

MATILDA LEICESTER.

WILLIAM OSSORY, Esq.

TO

MISS LEICESTER.

MADAM,

UNDER the impresson that
I yesterday felt, and which you so
amiably described, of your affliction
for the melancholy and recent
loss you have sustained, you will
pardon a request I am about to
make, which I own to be interested
in the first instance, although I
would endeavour to atone for this
selfishness in future.

What I wish your compliance
with, is, that, as I think it im-
proper for a young lady so amiable

as

as you are to reside alone without a protector, you would accept of me in that character, and also, that you would receive the friendship of my daughter in return for yours. The elegance and propriety of your manners will give a turn to hers such as I could wish; and you will confer a favour on us by giving up your house and taking a part of ours. We will endeavour to make Offory Place as agreeable as possible: and any thing Miss Leicester either wishes for or dislikes I shall take care to procure for her, or to remove.

Miss Offory is very anxious for a favourable answer to this letter, and would have written herself had not I prevented her, from an opinion that ladies generally say too much

much on some subjects, and a conviction that young ones do not always write to the purpose. I have been induced to hope that you will be frank, that you will readily confer an obligation on an old man, and that you will order our coach any day you chuse, when Miss Ossory shall, with myself, wait on and conduct you to this place.

I require only three lines in answer to this. As my eyes are bad, I therefore hope you will excuse

Yours,

WILLIAM OSSORY.

MISS LEICESTER

TO

WILLIAM OSSORY, Esq.

S I R,

Elm Wood.

I Readily agree with you that there are some subjects on which our sex are unqualified to write: I will therefore be frank as you desire, and own my inability to write on the present. Your offer of protection, and the friendship of Miss Ossory is highly flattering. I can only say that I hope to merit both, by a strict attention to that propriety you are pleased to say you observed in my behaviour, and that I will with gratitude accept your
gene-

generous offer. I will do myself the honour of waiting on Miss Offory as soon as my trifling affairs here will permit. In the mean time I am, Sir, your's and Miss Offory's

Infinitely obliged,

MATILDA LEICESTER.

MISS LEICESTER

TO

MISS BEAUCHAMP.

WILL not my dear Honoria
accuse me of caprice, and of asking
her advice on an affair I must have
determined on before I asked it,
when she finds me removed to this
place before her answer to my last
letter arrives? But indeed this is
not the case: Mr. Offory has made
me an offer of his house and pro-
tection in so gentleman-like and
delicate a manner, that I have not
hesitated a moment to accept it.
But I will give you an account of
the whole affair, and then you shall
judge

judge of my conduct ; and if I stand condemned by you, I must be guilty.

In concluding my last, you must remember I mentioned a visit I was to receive from Mr. and Miss Offory. They came at the usual hour. Having been writing to you about my dear parent, I was impressed with a more than common weight on my spirits, from which, as I expected company, I durst not, as I usually do, seek relief in tears : but nature, in spite of all my efforts to the contrary, would break forth : for the moment Mr. Offory came into the room I burst into a violent flood of tears, and it was some time before I could recover myself. This was occasioned by Miss Offory's leaning on the arm of her father

as she walked from her carriage to the door; a pleasure I could never again enjoy. The idea of this overpowered me for some moments. I apologized for my weakness, which was received with kindness by Mr. Offory. I cannot say that his daughter was so civil, she took numerous opportunities to awaken any little sensibility I may possess. She found a miniature of my father—I shall never forget her inhumanity! Taking it out of a case which inclosed it, “Dear me,” said she, “Miss Leicester, how very like your papa this is, what a pity he should die so soon? He looks quite young, don’t he, Sir?” addressing Mr. Offory. “Put it up, my dear,” said he, “don’t you see the subject infinitely affects Miss Leicester?”

Leicester?" "Lord! she is soon affected, indeed," said she, "if my saying it was a pity her father's dying so soon sets her a crying."

"Fie," said Mr. Offory, and looked an apology for his daughter. At length she went to my harpsichord, played two or three airs which she accompanied with her voice. It was the first time this instrument had been opened since the departure of him whose delight it was to hear me play upon it. All this tended to add to my distress, though accidental. After Miss Offory had entertained herself as long as she chose, she burst forth in the most violent encomiums on the fineness of the tone of the instrument, and applied to me to know if, as she heard, I was about selling the

furniture, I would part with this to her? I told her it was a present from my father, and that as such, as long as in my power, I should wish to keep it, but if ever I found that impossible she should certainly have the first offer. Unfeeling girl, thus to sport with my afflictions! She never lost her father! And if she had, riches and the vanities of the world would compensate to such a mind as hers for the loss. But I shall tire you. After a few compliments they went home, and in the morning, whilst at breakfast, I received the inclosed letter from Mr. Offory. You will think as I did, that it breathes a spirit of true benevolence. I considered that what he said was just. It was not proper, if in my power, to

to continue alone. Therefore I returned an answer as short as possible, on account of the delicacy, which you must have observed, of Mr. Offory's request at the conclusion of his to me, that my sentiments might be given in three lines. I believe, I exceeded that quantity, and accepted the offer with that gratitude it so justly deserved, and then hastened to settle my affairs at home as fast as possible, for the reasons I before assigned. Yet, when the hour of my quitting my once dear and peaceful habitation arrived, I really believe my mind was in a state of frenzy. Every thing became still dearer to me than ever ; and things that had before remained unnoticed, laid claim

claim at that moment of separation to my regard. I walked into the garden, not being any longer able to bear the house, and after taking leave of every tree in it, I sat down under the large oak my father was so fond of, and fell into a kind of stupor of grief, from which I was roused by seeing an old and favourite pointer lying by my side, licking my feet, and looking in my face alternately. I was silly enough to fall on my knees to kiss this animal, in which position Mr. Offory and his daughter found me when they entered the walk in search of me. The good old man would not allow, he said, a moment more to melancholy, and hurried me away, almost insensible, to

to Ossory Place. This happened only yesterday evening, therefore I can say little as to my situation. Miss Ossory behaved with a little more feeling, on the occasion I have just described, than on the visit she made me before. I have not slept a moment during this night, the first of my dependance. Every thing here is magnificent and new to me. Miss Ossory seems to be worshipped by her domestics as an eastern princess, and their attention seems to proceed like the adoration paid to eastern despots, from fear. It is much better, in my opinion, to live in the hearts of a few, than to receive the homage of the whole world in the way that it is paid to

this girl. I have a summons to dinner, therefore adieu, my dearest Honoria, and believe me ever,

Unalterably yours,

MATILDA LEICESTER.

MISS OSSORY

TO

MISS WEST.

My dear West,

I SHOULD have answered yours
fooner, but I have had my atten-
tion diverted by a new object, and
you know I always do as I like.
My father has, you must know,
invited a poor girl to come and live
with us, whose father is just dead.
I don't know but you saw her
when you was last here. She set
up then for a fine lady. Her
name is Leicester. Her father was
in the army, and has left her, for a
legacy, his old horse and his dogs.

C 6

We

We actually found her, when we went to fetch her here, on her knees a kissing a great old pointer. I intend to have some sport with her. She will serve the purpose better than either a squirrel or a monkey, because you know she can answer to a question. I must be civil to her, as my papa preaches about feeling and sentiment, and such stuff: for my part, I have a good fortune and don't want any such nonsense. What pleases me best, though I have reserved it to the last, as we used to do the apple-pye at school, is, that I am to go to London in a month, and then I will lead them all a charming dance. Don't you envy me, West? I know you do; so don't deny it. Miss Prim is to go along
with

with us. Papa is mighty obliging to her. I shall contrive bye and bye to make up for that. She won't walk in our shrubbery, because she can see, from that point of view, an old house and a shabby garden, where she used to live when she was a lady. I am desired by my father to observe the propriety of her manners. I am sure he never governed me when I was younger, and I am determined she shall not now, that I ought to be mistress of myself. I said all I could to prevail on the old man to let you come instead of Miss Leicester; but in this one thing, and for the first time, I could not prevail. The creature is reckoned handsome; but my fortune can be an overmatch for all her beauty at any

any time. I will let you hear from me again very soon, and you may depend on my being your friend when I am my own mistress.

Yours,

HELENA OSSORY.

EDMUND BEAUCHAMP

TO THE

EARL OF STANMORE.

MY LORD,

I Received yours, and am infinitely obliged by your invitation to Stanmore Castle: and though it is impossible for me personally to join in the general joy on your lordship's accession to your estates, yet believe me when I say, no one feels more satisfaction on this joyful occasion than Edmund Beauchamp. Nor do I, in any degree, envy your ample possessions except in one instance, which is, that of having so many opportunities of doing good. I cannot

cannot think it possible for human nature to enjoy more felicity on this side the grave, than, like you, to be possessed of a fine estate, and to be furrounded by a numerous tenantry who all look up to you as their father and protector. There is only one thing which you want, which is an amiable partner to share your joys: griefs I think you can have none. I dare say this last addition to your happiness will not long be wanting, as my father and Lord Harley are laying their heads together, and are actually projecting no less an addition to your estate, than thirty thousand pounds per annum, and two hundred thousand in ready money, together with Miss Offory, whom you saw at York races.

How

How stands your inclination towards matrimony? But modern matrimony needs not any thing to make it agreeable but riches; and if this be so, Miss Offory is certainly the most charming of her sex. It is very well I am not one of the nobility, as I should certainly break through custom and marry for downright disinterested love, and so be the laughing stock of the whole town. These are mere mechanical ideas I must own, and fitted for the sphere in which Providence has wisely destined me to move. I must say, however, that in our family we exhibit one instance of the folly of an union proceeding from disinterested love, at least from the mockery of it; for I fear this was not mutual. Interest weighed

weighed the scale on one side: which that was, I need not point out to you. My uncle Beauchamp is returned from the East Indies just as good and as odd as he left us. Is not this something to boast of after a residence of eighteen years in that country?

“Where nature’s blush by custom is wiped off,

“And conscience dead’n’d by repeated strokes.”

Not that I believe a truly good mind will be wholly altered by any change of place or circumstance. I do not feel the alteration in our family so much as my sisters do. They are more at home, and must feel the insolence of a mother-in-law of the same age with themselves. My poor father’s foible, is violent attachment to great folks,
and

and he would sacrifice any of his children to this weakness. Is not the fortune, which all our family have acquired by an attention to industry, as valuable? and does it not render its possessor as justly an object of respect as if he had inherited it from the first duke in England? I am of this opinion, and whilst I keep my heart, my honour and my health, I think myself as happy as a prince.

I shall expect a line as soon as feasts, balls and bon-fires will permit, saying when I may expect you in town: for if you don't come soon I will ingratiate myself into the good graces of this heiress, and who knows but fortune may be for once kind as she is capricious, and knowing that you want
not

not her favours, bestow them on me ? But as I have declared against mercenary motives, you are very safe, for I think with Pope, that, “ Esteem and love were never to be sold;” and, if they were, I would not be the purchaser. You must be tired with, and consequently out of humour at these effusions ; therefore I will conclude with wishing you as happy as your title and estate can make you, and that you will always rank amongst your friends,

EDMUND BEAUCHAMP.

MISS BEAUCHAMP

TO

MISS LEICESTER.

Upper Brook Street.

MY dear Matilda ought to have known me better, than to think I should ever accuse her of acting with caprice. Surely she could not err in accepting of the protection so generously offered by Mr. Offory. I congratulate you most sincerely on this event, but am sorry when peace begins to dawn in your breast, to be in any degree again the cause of a moment's pain to you. When you know the dreadful situation in which our family have been plunged, I am
sure

sure you will pity us all, but most truly your old friend, my sister Constantia.

My sister, you know, was on the point of marriage with Henry Seymour, but my father has acted in such a manner as obliges the match to be broke off, and she is now, notwithstanding all former engagements, to be married to Lord Harley. I cannot relate the circumstances of this disappointment, as I would avoid any accusation of my parent. I fear there is some trick in the affair, and that my mother-in-law is in the plot. Be it as it will, poor Constantia is to be the sacrifice. You know not what satisfaction I enjoy in the thought that just at this time you are coming to town. I cannot say
that

that your character of Miss Offory pleases me ; on the contrary, indeed, it excites my indignation, when I reflect that the amiable sensibility of your heart should become a subject of ridicule to such a mind as hers. What a difference between the sentiments of this lady and her father ? But as she is very young, I hope the example of my friend, as Mr. Offory so justly expects, will be able to correct the unamiable part of her disposition. You must excuse my writing you a short letter, for my time is entirely occupied in keeping up my poor girl's spirits. How she will support herself under this dreadful disappointment Heaven only knows. I shall expect to hear from

48 FATAL FOLLIES.

from you again before you leave
Offory Place. May every earthly
happinefs attend you!

HONORIA BEAUCHAMP.

THE EARL OF STANMORE,

TO

EDMUND BEAUCHAMP.

Stanmore Castle.

I AM much obliged to you for your congratulations on an event, which you seem to think ought to confer the greatest earthly felicity. I cannot say I feel at present any addition to what I before experienced. Certainty spoils the zest of every thing, and that this time would arrive, I have known, and been looking forward to it ever since I can remember. I cannot say that the noise and riot of the present scene charm me so much

VOL. I.

D

but

but that I shall be very glad when it is over.

Your question how my heart beats as to matrimony is certainly interesting; for from that event, instead of this, I hope I shall date the beginning of my happiness: not that I have any particular object in view, for provided the lady is neither old nor ugly, and I think Miss Offory is neither of these, why my good guardian is at liberty to chuse for me, at least to point out the lady. And as he has always studied my interest during my minority, I shall pay a due regard to his advice on this important subject. I expect to be in town in a fortnight, and then I shall see how I like the lady. Her fortune

tune pleases me well and will have its weight.

I am really sorry for your sisters, as I think them amiable girls. You are to inherit your uncle's fortune, and are of course independent of your father.

I shall yet expect a visit from you to Stanmore Castle. Perhaps you wait until there is a lady to entertain you, but I would wish you to come down before, if it were only to see how a batchelor keeps house. You must excuse me, as my rooms are, at this moment, all full of company.

Bon soir,

Yours always,

STANMORE.

MISS CONSTANTIA BEAUCHAMP.

TO

MISS LAURA SEYMOUR,

TO the stern dictates of inexorable duty, I have yielded every hope of future felicity, as I yesterday informed you in a short incoherent note, with an heart aching at the recollection of relinquishing ideas, which for the last two years of my life had formed its principal happiness.

From the smiling prospect of calling my Laura sister, and her brother by a more tender name, I am in an instant, when I thought all my wishes would soon be realized,

lized, plunged into an abyss of fate that will involve my future life in a long series of miseries, from which nothing can ever extricate me but death. But, by sacrificing myself, I shall preserve a dear parent from inevitable ruin, and then only be the sufferer myself. No ! I wrong the exalted nature of your brother ; he too must be involved in my misfortunes : my heart is most truly sensible what his must feel on this dreadful occasion. Yet would I were he ; I could better support his situation than my own. He may mourn unmolested, whilst my tears will be deemed guilty ; and I shall be accountable for every involuntary sigh which may escape from my bosom. My husband—and is it

possible that any other man than my Henry shall ever bear that name? He will watch your Constantia with a jealous eye, and construe every look to be meant as a reproach to him. For Heaven's sake what idea of happiness can he form to himself? What can he imagine will be the result of an union with me, who, as he knows, have long since bestowed my heart on one who will be dear to me until my latest breath? He knows that I always rejected his suit, until cruel Fortune put it in his power to triumph over every tender feeling I possessed. My poor father's fatal attachment to play, inspired Lord Harley with the thought, that if he could induce him to make any considerable
stake,

stake, should he be fortunate enough
 to be the winner, I might redeem
 what my father might lose. The
 plan was but too successful, and I
 must be either way wretched; in
 seeing my parent's distress, and
 knowing it to have been in my
 power to have relieved him from
 it, or in taking the misery to my
 own bosom in order to relieve his.
 The last of these is what I have cho-
 sen. What a heart and mind must
 that man possess, who can accept a
 hand on such terms? Do not let
 your brother think too hardly of
 me; but, if possible, forget that such
 a wretch exists. Yet I am incon-
 sistent in this request, for I be-
 lieve, if I thought it possible that
 he could totally obliterate me from
 his memory, I should be inconsol-
 able.

lable. The very idea of being for ever excluded from his remembrance, rends, at this moment, every fibre of my heart: for though we may never converse together more in person, yet my mind would frequently hold conversation with his, and I would live in his memory though separated from his affections. I must entreat, that though I cannot now call you by the endearing name of sister, you will not deprive me of that of friend. For few, indeed, are the comforts I shall have to boast of, when I exchange the name of Beauchamp for that of Harley, as I find I must do in the course of the ensuing week. I hardly think it possible that I can survive the fatal day on which an eternal bar is fixed between Henry
and

and myself. Tell him that I think I could silently submit to my fate, were I the only victim; but, that he is a sharer, adds, if possible, a keener pang to misfortune. And also say, if ever he marries, may he meet with one who will console him for the loss of her whose pride it would have been to study his happiness. The subject too powerfully affects me. Therefore believe me most truly yours,

CONSTANTIA BEAUCHAMP.

HENRY SEYMOUR, Esq.

TO

MISS CONSTANTIA BEAUCHAMP.

I NEVER envied the power or pomp attending riches, until I found they possessed attraction enough to disunite hearts, that I thought were so interwoven with each other, that no worldly motive could separate them; but now I find myself mistaken, and that the affections are subordinate to interest. Even the affections of Constantia are not proof against an empty title. Long may she remain in possession of this gilded toy of the fancy, if it can yield her any solid felicity!

licity ! She is entire mistress of my best and tenderest affections, and as such has a right to use them at her own pleasure. I once foolishly thought I had her's in exchange : but it was a dream, from which I am now just awake ; and which, like other pleasing visions, I could have wished to have been continued. But as it is, I submit to fate and Constantia, and remain most truly and unalterably her

HENRY SEYMOUR.

LORD HARLEY

TO

WILLIAM OSSORY, Esq.

Pall-Mall.

WHAT will you say to me when I bring down a young and beautiful wife? You know, you used to tell me you was certain I should never marry, as it was so difficult to please me. However, as arduous a task as you thought it, the thing is nearly accomplished; and on Friday next I expect to be at Harley Lodge, where I shall expect to see you and your daughter, and her female friend, to introduce them to Lady Harley. She is known to Miss Leicester already.

ready. I intend, with your consent, that Miss Ossory shall not long remain in her present state. You know my ward, the young Earl of Stanmore, who has released me of my charge, by his having just attained the age of twenty-one, and is now gone to take possession of an estate not exceeding eight thousand pounds a year ; upon which also there are a few mortgages. But his family is one of the noblest in North Britain, and Miss Ossory's fortune will make it one of the most opulent. Think of this, and give me your opinion when we meet. At present I am taken up with attending Miss Constantia Beauchamp, the youngest daughter of old Frank Beauchamp. It is true, I used a stratagem to gain her, but in

in love, as well as war, stratagems are allowed. I could not exist without her, as you will readily believe, when you are acquainted with the story ; for though I never told you, or any one else, of my folly, yet I have been one of the votaries of Cupid for more than a year. But there was a young fellow in the way to whom the jade pretended to have given her heart. You know Beauchamp is fond of play, and I persuaded him, one evening after drinking hard, with the assistance of his wife, who is my relation, to enter into it more deeply than he would have done in his sober moments. I let him win a considerable sum of me. Elate with success, he doubled the stakes, and, on my giving Mrs. Beauchamp under my hand, that, if I won his whole

whole fortune I would not insist on his relinquishing it, should he and Miss Beauchamp persist in refusing me, I played until I got my own cash returned; and before we parted I won every guinea he was possessed of: for these merchants have never any very great landed property. After I had done this, I generously told him, that if he would give his approbation, and dispose Miss Constantia to receive me as her destined husband, I would acquit him of his debt of honour. To this condition he agreed, and actually on the spot signed his consent; after which we parted for the night. I took care to wait on him the next morning before he was stirring, and remind him of his over-night's adventure, as his wife was to be ignorant of the whole affair. My
arrival

arrival was immediately announced to Beauchamp, who, no doubt, knew my errand, which was to demand either the lady or the money. The young ladies were just returned from an airing they had been taking with Harry Seymour my rival. Constantia looked uncommonly beautiful, as a fine woman generally does, after being on horseback. The negligent disorder into which the wind throws their tresses, gives them a grace, which it is not in the power of the most studied dress to bestow. I was shewn into the library, where Beauchamp very soon joined me. We immediately entered on the business. He proposed a number of ways of paying the debt. I cut the matter very short, by saying, that

that I expected from him. A man of honour, the terms proposed on the last evening, or to have paid the bet I had fairly one. He walked about, complained of his folly, and talked of his brother's blaming his imprudence. He cursed the cards, and, notwithstanding, me in his heart, though his friends would not let him do so. I told him I would take my leave, and wait on him again on that day week, when I should expect his final answer as to the terms I had proposed. I waited on him at the time appointed, and found what I wished, that the lady, not the guineas, were to be mine. The happy day is fixed for Friday next; and, as soon as we arrive at Harley Lodge, which will be in a day or two

two after, I expect to see you and your family : to which I hear, from Miss Beauchamp, that you have made an addition. You don't intend, like me, to play the fool and marry, do you? I hope you do, as that would keep me in countenance. I have wrote you a longer letter than I have done to any one for two years ; but the subject inspired me. Wishing you good health until we meet,

I am, Yours,

HARLEY.

MISS LEICESTER

TO

MISS BEAUCHAMP.

Offory Place.

MY dear friend's last letter, I must own, has surprized me. Your sister to be Lady Harley I can hardly think possible: Nor, at this moment, am I reconciled to this idea more than a dream, which has made so strong an impresson on my mind, that, on waking, I have not been certain whether it was truth or fiction. What can be the cause of this change of opinion in your father? I will not think him so weak as to be influenced in so serious a matter, by a title; and if not, I cannot conjecture what may

may be the occasion of this revolution, unless some quarrel has happened betwixt him and Mr. Seymour. From whatever cause it has proceeded, I heartily pity Constantia. Lord Harley has a most unamiable character in this part of the country ; and, then, the disparity of their years !—Your sister cannot be more than eighteen, and his Lordship is at least fifty. I find, by a letter Mr. Ossory has just received from him, that the wedding is to be celebrated on Friday next, on which day the bride is to come down to Harley Lodge. I hope you, my dear Honoria, are to accompany her. I have an invitation, for which I am obliged to you, I suppose, to attend Miss Ossory on their visit. We are making great prepara-

preparations to appear in full splendor. The London milliner has orders to make the most elegant and fashionable suit worn by people of the first rank, which will, no doubt, be expensive enough. I should not, were it in my power, dress so extravagantly on this occasion, which I consider as a melancholy one. I happened to say so in the hearing of Miss Ossory. I dare say, said she, you are the only person of that opinion: but, as you always affect singularity, it is agreeable to your system. I told her, I was sorry that we seldom agreed in opinions, but that I never gave up mine until I was convinced I had entertained a wrong one; and that I should be most truly happy to yield to her better sense, if I found this.

this marriage a happy one. She very pertly said, that, that might not be the case, for there were some people whose supreme felicity centered in being miserable; and as Lady Harley, that was to be, was my particular friend, why! she might be one of these very people. Mr. Offory put an end to this altercation, by saying, come, come, Helena, you don't make allowance for difference of dispositions. You are a gay giddy girl: Miss Leicester is a grave sentimental one; and you both are very good in your way, so no more disputes: the evening is fine, and we will take an airing round by Harley Lodge; when Miss Leicester shall see her friend's new habitation. We set out

out, and arrived there in about an hour and half. It is, I believe, about seven or eight miles from this place ; but a most delightful ride, as the road lies between a fine hanging wood, and a beautiful river which runs through the park, whilst groves of trees incircle the house, and form, in summer, a delightful shade. Walks are cut entirely through the adjoining wood, and breaks at proper distances to admit a prospect of the distant country, which is delightful, being formed of hill and dale, and agreeably interspersed with woods, rivers, and villages. And, I think, with a mind at ease, any one in this enchanting scene must find contentment. Without that, it
would

would have no charms. Give me but inward tranquillity, and a Kam-schatca hut, in preference to the riches of Golconda. I am not happy even here. I consider myself in a state of slavery, although I must do the justice to Mr. Offory, to say that, he always treats me with great deference and respect. But the proud imperious spirit of his daughter cannot bear the least controul. When she is married, if her husband does not give her entirely her own way, she says, she will make him repent it. So Heaven help the man who takes her for a companion for life ! When I reflect how seldom riches are attended with happiness I become reconciled to my own situation.

Pray

Pray tell Constantia that I truly sympathize with her distress of mind, but that she must endeavour to fortify herself with resolution to go through this trying scene, by reflecting on the noble propriety, resignation, and heroism of her own conduct; on the ruin from which it will redeem a parent, and the applause it will draw from earth and Heaven. Chuse, says Epicetetus, the most virtuous course of life, and custom will make it pleasant. Her situation, after the first tumults of her anguish have subsided, may not, perhaps, be so unpleasant as she imagines. Our journey to London is fixed for this day fortnight; for which, as you are coming to the country, I am

forry : but I suppose Lord Harley will, after a little time, rerurn to town. I am going with the family to pay a visit a few miles off, and must drefs.

Yours, affectionately,

MATILDA LEICESTER.

MISS LAURA SEYMOUR

TO

MISS CONSTANTIA BEAUCHAMP.

Wimpole Street.

YOU know not what I feel, and have felt, since the day my brother returned from Brook-street, with the dreadful news that he had seen your father, who told him your hand was to be given to Lord Harley. Language is insufficient to paint Henry's situation, both then and ever since. He came into the parlour, where he sat down, without speaking, as pale as a ghost. I entreated him to tell me what had affected him, and how

long he had been ill? To all which questions he seemed insensible. At length, he said, Laura, your brother is undone, Constantia—he could not utter a word more. I gave him some water and begged him to tell me what had befallen my friend ——. The villain shall not triumph over me, he said, I will be revenged on them both—I again entreated to be informed of what was the cause of his disorder. —Constantia no longer feels for me that affection she has so often said in your presence, should end but with her life, and now prepares to wed Lord Harley. Her father makes a story indeed, in order to deceive me; saying, that unless Constantia marries this proud peer his fortune is the forfeit—
I shall

shallow artifice to cover an inconstant heart! Wealth and title would be the forfeit should she marry Henry. Could you ever have supposed these could have any weight in her pure and exalted bosom? Perhaps it is a trick of her father's, and she is unhappy: if so, I would sacrifice the rascal to my just resentment. However, I will write to Lord Harley, and know how he dares to aspire to a rivalry with me. I endeavoured to prevail on him to let that alone until he had time to reflect on what was proper for him to do. It was impossible to reason with him. His brain was in a state of anarchy and confusion. He wrote twenty letters, and burnt them all: walked about the room, and called you

cruel, ungrateful, amiable and sincere, almost at the same moment ! At length he wrote a note to you, and immediately dispatched a messenger with it. I know not the contents of it : but if severe, excuse and pity my brother, who is now confined to his bed with a violent fever ; infomuch, that I am under great apprehensions for his life. Pray let me hear all the dreadful circumstances of your sufferings, as I well know, was there not a necessity for it, my dear Constantia's conduct would not be either exposed to censure from Henry, or need the excuses of Laura. When every circumstance is explained, I doubt not but she will be found to have acted on the principles of truth and honour.

—I have

—I have just received yours, which confirms what my brother said of the forfeiture of your father's fortune. Rash, inconsiderate man! What has he done! By one act of folly and imprudence, involved two amiable and truly deserving hearts in utter ruin and distress—I truly participate in both yours and Henry's misfortunes, for I have ever been accustomed to consider you as my sister, and can never separate the idea that you are so from my mind; though destiny may prevent this happy event from ever taking place. My tears fall on the paper whilst I write this sentence. In this very room in which I am now sitting, we have projected schemes of future happiness when you should

be united to my brother. Indeed, every piece of furniture here bears some memorial of you, as Henry always consulted you on any improvement or alteration he made. —But I ought not to oppress you with a recital of what must add an additional weight to your present affliction. Give me a line, in which I hope to find some consolation by that horrid wretch Lord Harley's relinquishing his claim to your hand. Excuse the harshness of my expression ; but I feel a just resentment against the man who has stepped in and destroyed all our smiling prospects : for I will not wrong my friend so far as for a moment, to suppose that interest has any weight in her determination in favour of his lordship.

Duty,

Duty, I own, has claims that cannot be dispensed with, and to those you yield yourself a dreadful sacrifice. Continue to write to me, and believe me truly yours,

LAURA SEYMOUR.

MISS OSSORY

TO

MISS WEST.

My dear West,

Ossory Place.

I HAVE a vast deal of news to tell you, therefore I could not resist writing. We have got a new neighbour, a lady of quality now, once a cit. Lord Harley has married a Miss Beauchamp, one of the friends of my Lady Companion, and as it seems, we are in a fair way to form a miserable society: for these ladies scorn to be happy. This they leave to vulgar minds. Lord Harley is stupid enough to fall in love with this girl, and to take
her

her without a fortune, though they say her father is rich. This exaltation, however, was not any matter of joy to Miss, as she was in love before with another person; pathetically so indeed, insomuch, that she is now breaking her heart at being made a lady. Harley must be in his dotage, or he never would have married this unfortunate damsel! On Monday last we paid them a visit. My father and his lordship being very intimate, we were to wave ceremony and take a dinner at the lodge. I had an entirely new suit on this occasion, which was charmingly made and fancied. Miss Leicester affected rather a genteel undress on this visit; but why, I cannot tell, as her foolish father had supplied

her with some very elegant clothes before he took it into his head to die. When we came within sight of the house she began to tremble and put herself in such a flutter, that I was in hopes she would have completed the scene with a fainting fit. I really believe this would have happened had I not reminded her, that as we had not any supply of water in the carriage, and the river was at some distance, an exhibition of this kind would be inconvenient until we got into the house. She did not deign to answer me; I suppose the perturbation of her mind on this dreadful occasion did not allow her. The carriage drove up to the door, and out came the hobbling bridegroom, who having
wel-

welcomed us, led me to the drawing-room, where I should have shrieked out, had I not been surrounded by company; for my ideas of a supernatural being were never realized before I saw Lady Harley. She was in white, and as pale as any ghost, looking the direct picture of "Patience on a monument
"smiling at Grief." His Lordship said that the fatigue of the journey had been too much for her ladyship, and that she had not yet recovered it. She pressed Miss Leicester, very affectionately to her bosom, and hoped to see us both very often. I shall not attend her parties, as I will never make myself wretched, I am determined. Lord Harley said many very civil things to Miss Leicester, and compli-

plimented my father on his taste and good fortune, in having found so amiable a companion for me. Now I should applaud his taste more if he would let me chuse for myself. Apropos—in the course of this bridal visit, Lord Harley said, “one wedding generally brings on another. What say you, Miss Offory, to a good husband of my chusing.” “Nay, my Lord,” said my father, “as that is a matter about which I never intend to contend with Helena myself—recommend one, if you please, and if she approves, I am satisfied.” Here I observed Lady Harley to look very significantly at Miss Leicester. She was thinking of her lover she had left in London, no doubt, not to my story of matrimony. I asked
who

who this lover, that was to be, was? and if ever I had seen him? To which he answered, who the lover is, I won't tell; but you have seen him. He is a very amiable young nobleman; and when we all meet in town, I will, with your's and your father's permission, introduce him. He had both our leaves, and I long for our being in town to see this swain; whom if I don't like, I positively won't marry. There was a sister of Lady Harley's with her, the friend and corresponding confidant of Miss Leicester; but these tender correspondents had not any opportunity during the whole day of uttering one sorrowful word, though I saw it in all their looks that they wished it. Lady Harley did not say much.

His

His lordship was attentive to her every look, and endeavoured to inspire her with cheerfulness: but she was determined, if we were entertained, that she, for her part, should not have any share in our satisfaction: I have not the least doubt, on my next visit, of finding all the apartments hung with black, and herself clad in the same colour.

Miss Leicester grows in the good graces of my father. Nothing that she either says or does is wrong. He yesterday made her a present of fifty pounds, in order to purchase, in London, what she liked, and desired her to let him know when this was gone and she should have a fresh supply.—I suppose that he will be for giving her a fortune bye and bye:—but I will take good
care

care that he shall not ; for if I am married, I will take her with me in order to plague her. She reads books that are perfect sermons to me, and afterwards walks or rides out with my father ; for I generally excuse myself, upon some pretence, as they are always preaching to me : nor am I sure whether my father is not sometimes in a disposition to excuse my absence. I cannot positively conceive what he can mean by his attentions to poor dependant creatures. I will never be governed by either of them. We leave this place in three days for the metropolis, where I expect much pleasure.

Adieu, yours,

HÉLENA OSSORY.

MISS LEICESTER

TO

MISS BEAUCHAMP.

Grosvenor Square.

I HAVE taken up my pen the first moment of leisure I have had since our arrival, to enquire after your health and that of Lady Harley. She exercised more fortitude on her marriage than I thought her mistress of; but I plainly saw her heart was torn by a thousand agonizing sensations. I observed her eyes all the while we were at the lodge, and they spoke the agony of her mind most eloquently. I am very happy to understand that you are to remain with her

her for some time ; though by this, I shall be deprived of your society. But should I, which is impossible, give my hand where my heart went not also, what a consolation, if that situation could admit of any consolation, would the company of my Honoria be to her Matilda ? I do not like the appearance of Lord Harley. There seems to me an air of dissimulation in every thing he says or does. It is true that in his marriage with your sister, he could not be actuated by any motive but by affection. Poor Constantia ! I hope when next we meet, that she will have got a little better spirits, and that time, which carries a balm for every wound, will yield one to hers.

Miss

Miss Offory has but just begun to exist as it were ; for this house is from morn to night a perfect warehouse, where the most expensive articles of dress are exhibited, of which she is constantly talking. I was this morning summoned to her dressing-room, and could hardly enter it for boxes. In the midst of these, sat Miss Offory ; and by her side stood Madame le Brun, the name of her milliner. “ Come here, my dear Leicester, only see what an elegant assemblage of fashion and taste Madame has brought to shew me.” The artful milliner said, she brought them to her, knowing that her superior taste would give *ton* to any thing. Obliging creature ! said Miss. The boxes were opened by

by a servant as madam was too consequential to stoop for the articles to shew them herself. It was a favour to come in person to wait on Miss Offory as she never attends any body, I understand, who is not dignified by a title. “ Here is a cap, said she, “ just imported from France ; the Queen wore it at the last Opera ; I had it as a great favour from her miliner the very next day, and have not yet been able to take a pattern of it, as it only arrived last night. Oh ! it will be divinely becoming.” Put it by for me, said Miss Offory ; in short, madam, leave that whole box of caps ; which she did, with twenty compliments to her extreme taste. Then a hat was produced, worn by Madame Elisabeth
of

of France. If this was true, a peacock could hardly vie with her in many coloured feathers ; the price of this piece of undress was only eight guineas, which was declared very cheap, both by the purchaser and seller. As soon as Lord Harley comes to town we are to be presented ; when Lord Stanmore, his late ward, is to declare himself a candidate for the prize : I mean Miss Offory's fortune ; for her heart, I dare say, he cares very little about. It has always been a subject of amazement to me, that wealth should take such hold of the mind, when happiness and contentment, which are far preferable, should seldom be able to turn the scale on their side. For my part, were I in possession of all
the

the riches of the East, I would cheerfully resign them for a competency, and the man of my heart. But I cannot expect that both these will ever be realised to Matilda: therefore the best way is to remain heart-whole, and to trust for the former to fortune. I shall, therefore subscribe now, as I suppose I shall ever remain,

Yours,

MATILDA LEICESTER.

THE EARL OF STANMORE

TO

EDMUND BEAUCHAMP, Esq.

Stanmore Castle.

WELL, since you won't come to Batchelor's Hall, why I will attend you in town, as your threat of rivalling me will not allow of any delay on my part to use all means in order to prevent it. Therefore, on Monday next, I shall be at my lodgings in Pall-mall, where, if disengaged, I wish to meet you. I never was more surprized in my life than on reading the newspapers last week, which announced an union between my old guardian, Lord Harley, and your sister Constantia. This has
since

since been confirmed by a letter from his Lordship himself, and an invitation to Harley Lodge, accompanied with his advice for my immediately addressing Miss Offory, which I intend to do the moment she arrives in town. I believe, I shall make an excellent husband, for if I know any thing of myself, my nature is both tender and complying: two good ingredients I have heard the ladies say in a husband. Cupid's arrows have not been pointed sharp enough to reach my heart hitherto: but how deep they may sink, now they are tipt with gold, I know not. Gold you know is a weighty metal, and Pluto and Venus in conjunction may effect much. I know your opinion is against an union of this kind, and I expect

very soon to hear that you are foused over head and ears in love with some pretty cottager, whose only portion is her virtue and her beauty. Whilst I am writing on this subject, a thought strikes me, that if your heart is set on such a treasure, I can shew you as fair an object for your admiration as your eyes ever beheld : at least a fairer face, or a more beautiful form, was never contemplated by mine. More than this I cannot say, having never spoken to either herself or her domestics. She resides on the border of my estate, in a deep and unfrequented glen. Therefore, if you like my short description, return with me to Stanmore Castle, and revive Arcadia here,

“ Where every Shepherd tells his tale

“ Under the hawthorn in the vale.”

Poor

Poor Constantia ! I really pity her ; married to age and ill-nature ! Where she not your sister I should hope to see him dignified as he deserves. He might be a warning to all old dotards in future. When I think on the subject I lose all patience ; and as nothing is more disagreeable than to write in an ill-humour, I shall subscribe myself,

Yours,

STANMORE.

GEORGE BEAUCHAMP, Esq.

TO

WILLIAM OSSORY, Esq.

Bath.

I Believe it is decreed by fate that we never are to meet: for to this place I have been driven by bad health, the constant effect of that cursed climate I have just left, and in which I now wish I had continued for the remainder of my life, as my old friends are all turned young and foolish, and are doing their utmost to render their posterity as wretched as possible, as they say, in order to ennoble, but, as I think, to ruin their families. My brother has done so, I am sure, by
first

first himself marrying a young beggar of quality, and then uniting a lovely girl, whose affections were engaged to a youth as amiable as she is beautiful, to a man with whom it is impossible that she can ever be happy. You too are just going to put your daughter up by auction; the highest bidder to become the purchaser. Oh! fie on such doings! It is not yet too late for you to retract. Then do it, and save yourself the pain of being the cause of misery to an amiable young creature, whom, at this time, you may render happy only by introducing her into the world, taking care of the company she keeps, and indulging her in her own choice. Let her society be select rather than crowded, where none but women

of worth, and men of honour, are admitted: and then if she errs your conscience will acquit you, as you will have acted as every good parent should. When we advance in years we should watch over our inclinations and indulgencies with great vigilance: for when the body becomes enfeebled by years, the mind partakes of its enervation. The only natural passion in declining years, is, I think, parental affection. This, I doubt not, you feel in its full force. Suffer the sentiments of Nature to flow uncontaminated by any mixture of false ambition. What must an aged parent suffer who sees his child sinking to an untimely grave, by having been forced into a hateful marriage to satisfy the avarice, or ambition,

of

of him who gave her being? and who ought to contribute all in his power towards her felicity? Think of this, and act with your usual good sense. I remember, when we were very young men, I have heard you harangue, with no small degree of eloquence, on the freedom of the heart, whose affections were not to be guided nor controlled, and execrate the sordid wretch who was a slave to interest. You was then in the vigour of youth, and you spoke according to the dictates of your own feelings. But the heart is apt to grow callous through time. Exquisite sensations, both of pleasure and pain, after a certain time of life lose their poignancy, and it is by memory only that we are informed that we were

ever in possession of either. But I would have you, my old friend, retain in your mind, if not the vigour, yet all the generosity of youth. I believe this possible, as I feel in myself all the inclination that I ever possessed to join with youth against the wisdom of age, where it sets itself in opposition to the tender and social affections. I freely confess to you, that I am as romantic in some of my ideas as any boy of fifteen. Age may philosophise with perfect coolness; but it is then only when it no longer feels those passions which makes the subject interesting. If I continue in this strain you will suppose that I am in love, and I shall not be angry with you, should you draw this conclusion. If I had never felt
that

that passion I should hate myself, and suspect that there was something unnatural in my constitution : but more of this at another time, as I am informed the post is just departing. Pray present my respects to the ladies.

Yours,

BAUCHAMP.

LADY HARLEY

TO

MISS LAURA SEYMOUR.

I Harley Lodge. KNOW my dear Laura will pardon my silence, when she reflects on the conflict I have sustained ; and, I trust, she will rejoice when informed, that I have now attained to what I never thought possible ; I mean, a silent resignation to the will of Providence. For these last four days my mind has experienced some little quiet from its tumultuous agitation. More than this is not possible : Peace can never again be an inmate of Canstantia's bosom. What becomes me now, is, not to repine. My friend, I trust, will pardon

don a request I am about to make. It will cost me infinite pain ; but I yield to the severe constraints of duty. Give me leave to decline any further correspondence. This is what I owe to Lord Harley as his wife, and in that character I would be irreproachable. I cannot command my heart, but I will controul my actions : and, I think, your judgment will not disapprove this determination, however it may rend your heart, by separating two friends, dear to each other from numberless circumstances that must no more be mentioned. These, however, memory will treasure up as her most valuable store ; and I will, like a miser, retire from the world to my secret hoard, indulging the dear remembrance of friends

whom fate has torn from my presence, but cannot separate from my imagination, awakened and invigorated in all its powers, by those very restraints intended to withdraw my regards from those I shall ever hold most dear, and to bury them in eternal forgetfulness. Yes! I will drop the silent tear over joys and hopes, as pure as they were fervent: Nor will the author of my being, blame effusions that flow from the fountain of nature. I have given to filial affection all that I could; to the remembrance of early and virtuous love, I must give what is not in my power to withhold. I will mingle the bitter cup that it has pleased heaven I should drink, with the melancholy pleasure of revolving in my mind

mind what I once was, and what I hoped once to be.

“ Awhile I'll sooth my troubled breast,

“ Then sink into eternal rest !”

Yes, my Laura, it is in the grave alone that I hope for repose. If while my body rests in that silent bed, my soul should retain its powers, I will still dream of the friends of my youth : nor, if the hopes of wise and good men in all ages, are not wholly without foundation, shall I ever cease to recollect them with a mixture of tender affection and anguish, until our spirits, still retaining their consciousness of identity, shall be reunited under some new form, in some future state of existence. Say then to your brother that,
deprived

deprived of his society, I have lost all relish for life, and look without terror on the gradual approach of death :

“ Which eases lovers, sets the captive free,

“ And, though a tyrant, offers liberty.

I think Lord Harley is now conscious that our union is not so compleat as he had thought it would be: his heart has followed a false meteor, which has now disappeared: the illusion has vanished, leaving him in possession of an empty hand. My feelings, however, great as they are, I have endeavoured to dissemble, and to feign contentment as much as possible. Surely I have acted the part my parent wished. I have
freed

freed him from embarrassment. Then why not drop the curtain here and let me quit the stage? I am truly weary of it.—My dear Honoria is with me, and most truly sympathizes in all my sorrows.

The silence and solitude of this place suits me well: but, I find, that next week we again return to London. My lord is anxious to have me seen; whilst I wish for nothing more than to remain here for the remainder of my wretched days. By degrees I part with my existence, and what is dearer, my friends.

Now, my Laura, I must bid a final adieu to thee with this sincere wish, that every pang I feel may be returned as a blessing on
your

112 FATAL FOLLIES.

your head, and that no moment
of your life may make you re-
gret the loss of

CONSTANTIA.

LORD STANMORE

TO

EDMUND BEAUCHAMP.

I AM sorry you are obliged to attend your uncle at Bath just at this season. I must wait with patience for your return. I arrived last night, and understand Mr. Offory has got the start of me, having reached Grosvenor-square last week. To-morrow my guardian comes to town: so that all things are in train for my loss of liberty. As soon as I alighted from my chaise, which I did at our old hotel in Covent-garden, I ordered some dinner, and, after
having

having made a solitary meal, I stepped into the Theatre in my travelling dress, in order to look over the box-keeper's book, where I had the satisfaction of seeing a vast many names I was acquainted with ; and, also, what pleased me very much, a box that was occupied by Mr. Offory. I soon found out which it was, and placed myself at some little distance that I might get a peep *en passant* of my future bride. There were two females in the front seat : Mr. Offory and another gentleman sat behind. Now the question was, which was the fair I sought ; for though I had seen her at York, it was only a transitory glance, and that in a carriage, so that I had no idea which was Miss Offory at the Theatre.

In

In this state of suspense, I betook myself to a review of both the ladies, and after having done so, scarcely knew to which, in respect to appearance on the whole, to give the preference. At length a gentleman, who sat in the same box with me, said to a lady of his company, I think that assemblage of different coloured feathers does not become Miss Offory. This remark determined what I wished to know. I instantly felt a sympathy and affection for her, as my destined partner, through life, and a secret exultation at my heart to find that she was the handsomest of the two. The other lady seemed to look with an air of melancholy, yet had a countenance expressive of much sweetness.

ness. She is tall and uncommonly graceful. Mr. Offory observed me and bowed. I returned his salutation, and immediately left the house, as I did not chuse to be seen by the ladies in such a dishabille. I think my fate is determined; I shall not struggle but patiently submit: and, on this occasion, I am most truly happy to find myself at my own disposal; for half the young men of my acquaintance, except yourself, have so often been in love before their marriage, that they enter into an union without a sufficient strength of attachment to give charms even to the famed honey moon. As to the rest of their lives, it is spent in search of variety, of which I do not envy them.

My

My chief delight would be, to marry an amiable woman, and endeavour to make her life pass in one uninterrupted scene of domestic and conjugal felicity. If I do not experience this fate, I shall be most extremely disappointed and unhappy. I wish I was acquainted with the temper of this heiress; for to be possessed of treble her wealth, I would not marry her if she had a bad one. But of this, I suppose, I must take my chance, as the females never trust us with their natural disposition until it is out of our power to escape them. I believe, however, that in the art of dissimulation in that point, we are a match for them. What a numerous train of evils would a little plain truth remove? But as I
never

never undertake what is out of my power to accomplish, I will neither attempt the arduous task of reforming the age, nor hesitate to seek possession of what is apparently good, because it may possibly be attended with some unseen evil. Hasten to town as I want much to see you.

Yours,

STANMORE.

HENRY SEYMOUR

TO

EDMUND BEAUCHAMP.

DO not for a moment, my friend, attribute to my silence a cold and passive disposition ; for if you admit such an idea you wrong me ; my resentment glows as warm as it did the first day I received a dismissal from your father. Accursed be the remembrance of that day ! and doubly so the wretch that occasioned it ! I do not intend to let him triumph over me. It was my determination to have prevented the completion of his
feli-

felicity, had not a fever seized me, by which I was threatened with the loss of my life : but this is lent me a little longer to punish him who has robbed me of what gave it all its charms, the affections of your sister. I, in the frenzy of passion, accused her of sacrificing me to ambition, though I am now fully convinced that she, too, suffers from this hated union. But, if I have any skill, she shall soon be released, and then I will with pleasure resign my breath. Do not suppose that this letter is intended to reproach you for the part acted by your family against me, as I well know the generosity of your nature disdains such meannesses. Mrs. Beauchamp was the instigator of this vile plot, for which I will be revenged. I have

have just seen a letter from Constantia to Laura. I cannot bring myself to write her present name, wherein she declines any farther correspondence with my sister. This adds to my admiration of her character, though nothing could to my affection. It is written in the strain of a heart borne down by affliction. She shall not fall a silent sacrifice, believe me ! For myself, after what has happened, I care not. Only this I will say, that my regard for you will remain undiminished, whilst I am,

HENRY SEYMOUR.

MISS LEICESTER

TO

MISS BEAUCHAMP.

Grosvenor Square.

I HAVE been in daily expectation of seeing my sweet friend and her suffering sister in town, otherwise I should have wrote to her before.

Indeed we have been engaged in a tumult of amusements, which I believe will never cease; I mean Miss Ossory's relish for them, which remains undiminished. At every new place she enters, such is the power of gold, that she adds a new lover to her train, which will presently be so numerous that, like
Pene-

Penelope's suitors of old, they will eat us out of house and home, for Mr. Offory invites and entertains them all splendidly. Miss Offory laughs, coquets, and quarrels by turns with every one; but I believe cares for none of them longer than they contribute to her entertainment.

I have not once mentioned myself, who, in a letter to one who takes so warm an interest in my fortune, ought to have been the first subject. Indeed you are almost the only person sincerely concerned in my fate or fortune. I live in a constant state of perplexity, poised between gratitude and contempt. Mr. Offory is continually heaping favours on me, and his daughter as constantly endeavour-

ing to give me uneasiness : Were it not for the former circumstances, I would not remain longer in this family.

We yesterday paid the first visit at your house. Mrs. Beauchamp received us with all possible state. Your father, with his usual good humour, welcomed us to London, and said, as he had lost his girls, his old woman and himself must endeavour to entertain us. Your mother said, “ Pray Mr. Beauchamp, don’t call me old, and “ I will give you leave to take “ what liberty you please with “ yourself;” and then broke out into an affected laugh, though it was easy to perceive she was displeased. Miss Offory and Mrs. Beauchamp seemed to be delighted with

with each other. The power of sympathy unites persons of similar sentiments and dispositions in very close bonds of intimacy. I heard them talking about you and Lady Harley. They laughed often; and Miss Offory said, she cannot but be miserable now that she is married to a nobleman, whose whole study seems to be her happiness. I could not hear more as I was talking to Mr. Offory and your father in another part of the room; nor from this specimen of their wit did I wish to join their conversation. When we came away, which Miss Offory refused to do, until your father named a day for dining with us, she no sooner seated herself in the coach, than she burst forth into the most violent exclamations in

praise of the beauty, sense and accomplishments of your step-mother, and wondered how so charming a creature could condescend to accept an alliance with your family. She was sure your father could not deserve her. I, being not in a very good humour, as both these ladies had treated me with a kind of *sans froid* I was little accustomed to, answered her, that if Mrs. Beauchamp had declined Mr. Beauchamp's hand, his family would not need to lament the misfortune, as I did not to think a needy woman of quality any great acquisition to it. She said, why, no! it is very true, Miss Leicester, beggars who set up for fine ladies must be an incumbrance wherever they are admitted; looking very significantly at me, whilst she delivered this

this

this sarcasm, which penetrated my very soul. The coach, at this moment, stopped at home; and, on my alighting, I went to my own room, where I gave vent to feelings which it was impossible to restrain, and which would have delighted this imperious girl to have witnessed. Good heaven! that there should exist a being who could receive pleasure from the exercise of a power to imbitter the life of a fellow-creature! That Miss Offory, however, does sincerely exult when she has rendered me wretched, I am sensible. I fancy that Mr. Offory had been reprimanding his daughter for her rudeness to me, as he never fails to do, when she exercises her cruelty in his presence: for, as she passed

my door, I heard her say, I am very glad my father has got a mistress for his family, for I am sure I will not stay long in it. Her dressing-room door was shut with great fury. I had excused myself from coming down again that evening, by saying, I had a violent head-ach, which I was sorry for afterwards; for in a quarter of an hour after, Mr. Offory tap't at my door and enquired if I would admit him to speak a few words with me. I desired him to walk in, which he did, and then began as follows. "Miss Leicester, I am come to enquire after your health, and to entreat your excuse of Helena's conduct, at which I can assure you I was greatly shocked. You must attribute it to her youth; and, also, blame

blame me, who have given her her own way in every thing, so that she cannot now bear the slightest contradiction. I most truly feel for, and sympathize with, a beautiful young creature like you, who are subject to the whim of a giddy girl, like my daughter, and if it were in my power to mitigate, in your behalf, the rigour of fortune, I would do it. Indeed you are a most amiable and engaging young woman, and were it not for some few obstacles on my part, and perhaps some little delicate scruples on your's, it might be possible to render your situation more agreeable. Tell me, my dear, is your heart yet unengaged; you will perhaps think this an impertinent question from me.

But believe me, I am deeply interested in your comfortless situation; therefore you must excuse me." Here he came up to my chair, took me by the hand as I was in tears, entreated me not to afflict myself, as he was most truly my friend, and as he hoped to be able to promote my happiness. I was so penetrated with gratitude that I kissed his hand, which was still holding mine, thanked him for his attention to an orphan, and prayed most fervently for his happiness, and that of his family. He then told me that he had a proposal to make at some future period, which would bind and confirm him in his friendship to me whilst he existed. He kissed my hand as he let it go out of his, and, at this instant, Miss
Ossory

Offory bounced into the room. I am persuaded she had been listening all the time her father had been in it. "I beg your pardon, Miss Leicester," said she: "I did not know that you was engaged. I only came to see how your head was—good bye." She shut the door and went down stairs. Mr. Offory then desired I would come to supper, and left me greatly embarrassed at what had happened, which though it proceeded from goodness of heart on one part, and gratitude on the other, is yet capable of any construction that this ill-natured girl may chuse to put upon it. I heartily wish that she was married, and I at liberty to quit the family. But I will not load your mind with my misfor-

tunes. You have at present a sufficient degree of misery to contemplate in your amiable sister, to whom I beg to be remembered in the tenderest manner.

Yours ever,

MATILDA LEICESTER.

LORD STANMORE

TO

EDMUND BEAUCHAMP, Esq.

IN my last I told you I had seen my intended, but now I can inform you that I have both seen and conversed with her, am pleased with her person, manners, and fortune, that I have declared myself her lover, have been received as such, and that, when all matters are settled between Mr. Offory and Lord Harley, I shall commence married man. Thus far we run before the wind. There is an innumerable host of disappointed rivals; most of whom, I believe, wanted

wanted the money more than the lady. Now I declare this not to be my case, as I really feel an affection for herself. She has a young lady with her, as a friend and companion, an officer's daughter, who appears to be very amiable. I shall entreat that I may not be the cause of separating these friends by my union with one of them; and that she will consider me as her protector. Now if you should like her, who knows but a match may be made betwixt you two.

I really was greatly affected when introduced to Lady Harley. A silent tear stole down her cheek. When I led her to her seat she sighed deeply. Soon after my Lord and myself retired to his library to talk
about

about business. He then asked what I thought of his marrying; if I did not think him a bold fellow to take a young woman at his time of life. I just complimented him on his taste, and waved the discourse, as I could not give him my real sentiments, and I would not dissemble.

Mr. Offory seems to be a good kind of old man, and his daughter is a beautiful accomplished girl, with whom I have little doubt of being very happy. She sings and plays divinely, and you know my taste for music. You must positively go down to Stanmore Castle with us, as I intend to do immediately on our union, in order to give Lady Stanmore a specimen of northern hospitality and manners.

ners. I hope she will be pleased with both, as I would chiefly reside in that country, cultivate my estate, and, being happy myself, endeavour to diffuse happiness on all around me. I do not approve the present mode of deserting estates, and only returning to them once a year, in order to get as much cash as can possibly be raked together by distressing industrious tenants, and thereby putting it out of their power either to do justice to their landlord or themselves, in order to return to London, or any other scene of dissipation, and squander that money in the service of vice and folly, which might be spent in their own county to the advancement of their interest and happiness. The news of the approach of such
a man

a man to his estate must be attended with terror and dismay, every one dreading that the iron rod of power will fall on himself. Therefore as I would not have the curses of any one; but as, on the contrary, I esteem the approbation and the sympathy of my fellow-men, as the sweetest cordial of life, I will live amongst my own people, see them, and redress their grievances. I will be their friend, and not their master. Go down then with me, and see how I am received, and you will oblige,

Yours,

STANMORE.

MISS OSSORY

TO

MISS WEST.

Grosvenor Square.

I Positively have not had a moment to spare since I entered this dear city, nor ever shall, if I stay in it a century: but I cannot resist writing to tell you that I am in a fair way of leaving this country. A Caledonian Peer has offered me his hand, and I have agreed to give him mine in return, if I don't change my mind. I cannot, for my life, shed one tear on this occasion, so that no doubt I shall be esteemed vulgar by Miss Leicester, and

and all her melancholy friends. It is very odd, that since she came here, she has not got one lover, whilst I am pestered to death with them. I have desired half a dozen of them to transfer their attention to her; but the creatures say, What! take a piece of still life, whilst there is so much beauty and animation in view?—meaning my Ladyship I suppose. By the bye, I shall not dislike to be called My Lady, it is so much easier expressed than Helena, or Miss Offory. My Lord Stanmore is an elegant young man, not very delicate in his make, but has a charming countenance, and report says a very amiable disposition. Therefore, I shall be able to do as I like, which has been my constant study hitherto. My
father

father is quite busy with the lawyers, for he told me yesterday, that they should not have so good a bargain as they thought of in me, as he would take care to secure the estate in my own power; for that old fool, Lord Harley, on whom Lord Stanmore depends, is so taken up with his whimpering wife, that he is not so attentive to the matter as he would be, if this was not the case. This is delightful, is it not, to live without control! I love my father better than ever, and I believe he does so by me, as he is continually giving me money in order to purchase cloaths; and, as to diamonds, I have a profusion of the most brilliant lustre. I will astonish all North Britain with my splen-

splendor. The envy of the world is to me delightful. I should hate my riches if they could not procure me this. Oh dear! I had like to have forgot: do not let me be so cruel to poor Leicester as not to allow her one lover. She would not, I believe, have had that one had he not been my father; and, therefore, you know, my dear West, he could not be in love with me. This is positively true; he visits her in her chamber, kisses her hand there, sympathizes with her in all her distresses; which, to say truth, are pretty numerous; and scolds me when I offend her. She is uneasy at every thing, and wishes to be thought amiable. However, she shall not catch my father, although

though she has spread her net for that purpose. I intend to take her with me, as Lord Stanmore has given her an invitation, supposing us inseparable friends. I shall not now undeceive him, just at this time, as I wish him to continue in his opinion until some future period, when I may wish to throw her off.

I have not forgot my promises to you, which shall be realized when I am a little settled. For at present, what with receiving tradespeople in the morning, and visitors in the evening, I am employed from morn till night. The important day is fixed for Thursday sevenight, when we proceed on our journey to Scotland. My father
goes

goes with us, and Mr. Beauchamp, whom I have not yet seen. This young gentleman is brother to Lady Harley. Adieu !

Yours,

HELENA OSSORY.

MISS LEICESTER

TO

MISS BEAUCHAMP.

Grosvenor Square.

LET me congratulate my dear Honoria on her arrival in town, and Lady Harley on having attained so much composure. Which I had, indeed, anticipated in my expectations, as I had the strongest reliance that such a mind as her's would, sooner or later, be restored to some measure of tranquillity, by a sense of moral duty, and the power of religion. Time, I yet hope, will erase from her memory the idea of past disappointments; and,

and, in their place, raise a fair structure of happiness for the remainder of her days. Here we have not one melancholy thought, or, at least, are not supposed to have any; though something like it often intrudes itself on me when I think either of the past or the future period of my life. Lord Stanmore has offered me his protection, and desired Miss Offory to prevail on me to accompany her to Stanmore Castle, which she did in the presence of both her father and his Lordship; and in so friendly and polite a manner that I could not refuse, tho' I intended to have done so. Lord Stanmore said, that this being the first request he had made to Miss Offory, he hoped I would not put it out of her power

to comply with it, as any act of disobedience after, he should place to my account. Mr. Offory said, he did not intend to part with me, as he should want both an house-keeper and companion more when his daughter left him than before. I reflected, that certainly the protection of a lady would be more proper than that of a gentleman, and that as it was impossible, without ingratitude, to decline both these offers, Lady Stanmore's would be the most prudent; tho' Mr. Offory's friendship was the most certain, as he had ever behaved with kindness and tenderness. I shall not make my residence of any long duration, should it not be agreeable; but I must make the trial. Miss Offory is the gayest,

gayest, and, at the same time, the most thoughtless creature imaginable. It astonishes me, that any one should be on the precipice of their future fate, which I always consider matrimony to be, and yet feel no more than taking a partner for an evening at a ball, where the consequence of the man, and nothing else, is attended to. This, however, is Miss Offory's case. She never talks of any thing but the felicity of being entirely her own mistress, and never has the smallest idea of consulting the happiness of her husband. Whatever degree of this he may enjoy must proceed entirely from himself; for she disdains to contribute to it. I do not wonder, however, at Lord Stanmore's being deceived in her; for,

when she pleases, she has most imposing manners. Even I myself have sometimes thought her amiable; and as she has studiously applied herself to please him, may she continue to do so ! For I really feel myself interested for him. There is a softness and pliability in his disposition that deserves attention. On Thursday next the wedding is to be celebrated. The ceremony, according to modern custom, is to be performed in this house. I do not approve of this, but my opinion will have no weight when opposed to fashion, the present governor of polite life. I think that an engagement so solemn as that of marriage, ought to be made in a more serious place than a drawing-room ; and that as there is a temple
confe-

consecrated to God, who is a witness of mutual vows, there they should be made, not in a place where truth never makes its appearance. For, though a vicious heart may appear in a church, yet there is nothing said there that can add to its depravity: and therefore the place is still justly held sacred. We set off immediately after the ceremony to Offory Place, where we are to stay a few days just to display our grandeur; and then proceed directly for Stanmore Castle. Your brother, I find, accompanies us. I dare say I shall not know him, it is so many years since we have seen each other: but, as the brother of my Honoria, he is secure of a place in my esteem.

H 3

I have

I have just received a fresh proof of Mr. Offory's benevolence. He has given a parcel into my hand as he passed my room-door; which I find, on opening, to be a bond, by which he gives me one hundred pounds a year. He says, in a note, that he gives me this, being afraid lest his daughter's generosity should not keep pace with my deserts. As he will not always be present to see what I may have occasion for, he begs my acceptance of what he calls that trifle, and with this restriction, that his daughter may never be made acquainted with it. This proceeds from his knowledge of her disposition, which can never bear to see any one tolerably happy who is not made so by her own beneficence, which he knows to be

be capricious and precarious. I had just written to thank my benefactor for this last instance of his goodness, when I received a trunk directed for me, containing a large supply of every article of female dress of the best kind, but no letter, or any thing that might lead me to guess at the giver. Mr. Osfory must have done this. How different the disposition of father and child! I yesterday saw Mr. Seymour for the first time. He looks as if he were sinking into the grave, and is a most affecting object. He said very little, but sighed often. When the wedding, which is our constant topic, was mentioned, he said, happy Stanmore! unhappy Seymour!—and looked to me as if he thought that I could in-

terpret his meaning. He enquired after your health, and said, Miss Leicester ! there is an angel, whose life is dearer than my own ! Is she well ? Happy I fear she never can be. I said, your sister was tolerably well : I would not call her Lady Harley for fear of distressing him. I am convinced that he understood my meaning ; for he took my hand, as we were standing at the window, and pressed it, saying ten thousand thanks for that delicacy which induced you to avoid mentioning a name that enters like a dagger into my very soul. Just as he uttered this sentence, Miss Osborn burst into a violent laugh— Said she, my Lord, Miss Leicester is a going to console your friend for his loss : it will be an admirable match :

match : they may sigh together
 “ from morn to night, from night
 to dewy eve, a live long summer’s
 day.” What say you ? will they not
 be companions ? He answered,
 that the unhappy always wish for
 friends who can feel for and com-
 passionate their misfortunes ; and
 that sympathy and mutual esteem
 have very frequently been the means
 of forming an union, perhaps more
 permanent than any of those that
 are produced by violent love. He
 added, that should this be the pre-
 sent case, he would be very happy
 in being the means of bringing it
 about. Miss Offory did not seem
 pleased. Mr. Seymour bowed to
 Lord Stanmore, and I returned to
 my chair, vexed to be made the
 sport of the unfeeling.—I will

154 FATAL FOLLIES.

write, if possible, again to-morrow.
I shall contrive to spend one day
with you before we leave town.
My best wishes attend Lady Harley
and yourself.

MATILDA LEICESTER.

LORD HARLEY

TO THE

EARL OF STANMORE.

MY LORD,

I Cannot express the infinite pleasure I feel in finding you so near the summit of my utmost wishes; and shall now think myself at liberty to resign my trust of guardian, which I never did before, although the law released me from the duties of that relation. You will be in possession of three very desirable objects; youth, beauty, and immense fortune. May health but

be continued, and you cannot have a desire ungratified.

And now, let me thank you for your and Mr. Offory's polite invitations to be present at your union, and to return with you into Scotland; the last of which, however, I find it impossible to accept, as Lady Harley's health will not permit her to quit her chamber. I shall endeavour to be present at your marriage, and attend you to your carriage afterwards. This is all I can do at present; and you, who are a lover, will excuse me. I shall expect to hear from you on your arrival at Stanmore Castle. Lady Harley joins me in compliments to Miss Offory and yourself.

Yours,

H A R L E Y.

EDMUND BEAUCHAMP

TO THE

THE EARL OF STANMORE.

TEN thousand thanks, my dear Lord, for your last night's introduction. I am now not only ready to travel to Scotland, but to the end of the world with you. Do not look grave : for though I think Miss Offory a divine woman, I am not in love with her, but in her train there is an angel, whose soul speaks in her eyes, and whose form is Beauty's self. Though I had no opportunity last night of asking her name, yet I suppose this lady
to

158 FATAL FOLLIES.

to be Colonel Leicester's daughter. If so, let me entreat you to enquire whether she has yet any attachment. If she has, mine is an hopeless suit : for there is that about her manner which tells me she is not capricious. Give me a line, if you have any mercy : say she is disengaged, and I'll bless you for ever.

Yours,

EDMUND BEAUCHAMP.

EDMUND BEAUCHAMP, Esq.

TO

GEORGE BEAUCHAMP.

DEAR UNCLE,

Offory Place.

I THINK I have heard you say, that the Hindoos, who are lovers of splendour and magnificence in every thing, but particularly in what relates to their women, will, on occasion of the marriages of their daughters, pour forth the collected treasures of many industrious years. I question, however, if at any time, during your long residence in India, you witnessed a more splendid or pleasing spectacle, or so striking an

an exhibition of solid wealth and consequence, as has been opened, for several days, at Offory Place. This castle, palace, or commodious mansion, for it is not any one of these, but partakes of the nature of them all, is situated on a gentle eminence, in the midst of a park of vast extent, interspersed with groves and allies of trees, some of which being old, call to the mind of the spectator the early importance of the Offory family; and others lately planted, or sprouting from the roots of such as have been felled, bespeak the wise and elegant œconomy of their present master. The same idea, the same happy union of magnificence and beauty is presented to your imagination when you cast your eyes on
various

various pieces of water, formed not by heavy and artificial mounds, but wherever the nature of the ground invites, or the necessity of draining the marshy soil urges the hand of industry to make them. These lakes are filled with various kinds of fishes, new broods of which are imported from different places. The borders are planted with osiers, which, at the same time that they serve as an ornament, are useful for the purpose of making casks and barrels, in which the finny race may be preserved and transported to different parts of the country. Waving and winding stripes of fragrant beans and mustard, for which this country is distinguished, of blooming peas, and

and corn assuming different colours at different seasons, intersect, at wide distances, and form, as it were, so many natural zones for beautifying the varied scene. In the green expanses, extended between these and the lakes, and the groves, and allies of trees, troops of animals roam at large, whether in quest of food, or gamboling in sport and play. The young horse, yet unsubdued by the laborious hand of art, skims, in native majesty, over the plain, and, forgetful of his food, such is the sociability of his nature ! demands, with loud neighs, the company of his fellow, whether he has strayed from his side by accident, or been trepanned into obedience to the curbing bridle. The stern bull threatens his
rival

rival in deep and horrid accents.
 The lowing kine mourn the loss
 of their calves, or dare, in their
 defence, the cautious hind, who
 prudently opposes fly art, rather
 than force, to the awakened cou-
 rage of parental nature. The nim-
 ble deer trip o'er the lawn ;

And the tender lambkins play,
 And sport their harmless time away.

But, I perceive, that I am begin-
 ning to exchange the epistolary for
 the poetic strain. It is difficult,
 however, not to fall into some tone
 of this kind, however harsh or
 rude the notes, when one contem-
 plates the varied energy of nature,
 and particularly as it is displayed in
 the sympathetic and social instincts
 of the brute creation, so wisely
 adapted

adapted to the preservation of both the individual and the species ; and which pious men, and even profound philosophers, have not scrupled to pronounce the immediate voice of God.—I once knew a gentleman, of a most ardent imagination as well as vehement passions, acknowledge, that when he has beheld an hen gathering her young ones under her wings, or dropping for them the grain for which she has searched with great industry and labour, he has fallen down on his knees in a sudden fit of devotion. The same gentleman excused, on this ground, the superstition of the antient Egyptians, who were wont to worship serpents and various other kinds of animals.

The

The celebrated naturalist, Linnæus, used to observe to his pupils, at the university of Upsal, that the world was a musæum. Such a musæum as the world is, on a grand scale, Ossory Place and park appear to me to be in miniature, according to the style of a Chinese garden. The spacious lawns and fields are covered with flocks and herds. The waters with fishes: the woods with birds. Gardens and arable fields exercise the industry and art of man. Little villages, formed for the conveniency of hundreds of labourers, give variety and life, even human life and action to the skirts of the vast enclosure, while Ossory Place is the superb mansion of the sovereign who

who governs the whole.—Ossory Place is situated nearly in the centre of Mr. Ossory's estates, which, taken all together, are of amazing fertility as well as extent, and cultivated with consummate art and care by a numerous tenantry, for the most part in easy, and some of them in affluent circumstances. Of this affluence we have had most sensible proofs for the several days that have passed since our arrival at this place. To describe these, with other collateral circumstances, was, when I took up the pen, the grand object of this epistle. But I know not how it has happened that I have been detained so long among parks and farms. I must therefore defer the enumeration, which I intended,

tended, of other particulars till
another opportunity. For,

The cry of the hounds, and the sound of the horn,
Upbraids my too tedious delay. —

I am, dear Sir,

Your affectionate nephew,

EDMUND BEAUCHAMP.

MISS LEICESTER

TO

MISS BEAUCHAMP.

Offory Place.

THE long wished for day being passed, I again date this from a place where my eye can gaze with a melancholy pleasure on scenes of former tranquillity and delight. I believe, when we arrived at Offory Place, I was the only one, amongst a numerous train, whose eye had glistened with a tear during our journey: nor should I have been forgiven had this been seen. Your brother, I believe, perceived my agitation, but kindly took no notice.

tice. It was not possible to pass Elm Wood, the seat of health and peace, where I had, from my earliest infancy, attended to the instructions of the best of parents, and find it wild, deserted, and in a state which spoke more forcibly than any words, the loss of its former master, without feeling emotions which will not bear description.

But the occasion of this letter was to give you an account of a wedding. I will therefore check the intrusions of self-love, and give you a short account of our reception here, as Lord Harley, I doubt not, would of the wedding in town. Perhaps his Lordship might forget to tell you how we were paired on our commencing our

VOL. I. I journey.

journey. Lord Stanmore's post-chariot, drawn by six beautiful Arabian horses, in which were seated himself and bride, was attended by four servants in, and two out of livery. Mr. Offory's new coach, with six grays, which held your brother, himself, and me, was also followed by six servants. Immediately after us, followed Lord Stanmore's travelling chaise, with his Lordship's valet and her Ladyship's woman. Mr. Offory's chariot which brought up the rear, contained my Lady's maid's maid, and Mr. Offory's own servant. Thus we travelled on until we arrived within six miles of Offory Place, near Darlington, where we were joined, I really believe, by every male and female within ten miles of

of the place. A numerous band of tenantry mounted on horseback, and many of them attended by servants, swelled our gay train.

Thus we proceeded on until we came to the park, which was filled with people, who welcomed our approach with shouts that seemed to re-echo from the skies. In short, Joy and Festivity seemed here to have taken up their abode. I alone, impressed with many tender ideas, breathed a sigh on this happy occasion. Mr. Offory's whole attention was taken up with gazing on his daughter, whom, to say truth, I never saw appear more amiable. Lord Stanmore is enraptured with her. These three days have been one continued scene of feasting and mirth; and to-morrow we set forward for

Stanmore Castle. How happy would your Matilda be, to be left in the delightful solitude of Elm Wood; this fortune denies, and all other situations to me are equal. I was taking a little walk yesterday morning alone, in order to recruit my spirits, as violent mirth has always the effect to render me melancholy. When I came to one of the gates of the park, a boy, whose daily employment it was to open it to passengers, the instant he saw me, ran with the swiftness of lightning, to a little cottage within sight, when a woman, attended by two small children, who followed her, approached me. "Oh, God in heaven for ever bless my young Lady!" said she, before I was near enough to see who it was who thus

saluted

saluted me : but on her coming nearer, I found it to be a woman for whom my mother had a great affection, and who had been married, soon after her death, to an industrious, hard working man. A cart went over him in the field, a few weeks before, which killed him on the spot. His poor widow was deprived of her only support; “and God knew,” she said, “how soon the parish might be her only resource. Ah, Miss ! your dear good papa too is gone, else I should not want a friend. My poor little children also, they must leave me ! It grieves my heart to hear them cry—Thomas loved them dearly, but he is gone—poor fellow, he would often go without shoes, when he wanted them, that these

babies and I might have a pair.—
 And now what is to become of us?"

—The children began to sob. My heart beat in unison with theirs, and I joined in the lamentation for poor Thomas. I promised to speak in their favour to Mr. Offory, who may employ them in his gardens or fields! If I am successful, you don't know how happy it will make me. Poor Martha, I have heard my father say, was an excellent servant, and she has often wept and told me stories of my mother. Before I parted from her, she said, "Miss, I am sure your heart will be grieved when you know that they are going to cut down your favourite oak, isn't it cruel! I would give an hundred pounds if I were a great lady to save it."

"And

“ And so would I a thousand, Martha, if in my power,” said I, “ but we are poor.” “ More is the pity, that you, my young Lady, arn’t rich.” I would I were so for this poor creature’s sake. I took my leave of her, with an assurance of visiting her before I leave Offory Place, and then proceeded on to Elm Wood, for fear my oak should be felled before I had the pleasure of sitting once more beneath its venerable branches. My seat was already carried away: Desolation seemed to spread its horrors over the whole place; and the house was mouldering fast to ruin. I watered the ground with my tears and again returned to the house of joy. The gentlemen are all gone on a hunting party, and

Lady Stanmore is not yet stirring :
 I have therefore stolen an hour
 in order to dedicate it to you. Let
 me know every thing material that
 passes, as nothing can be indifferent
 to me that is the subject of your
 pen. On our arrival in the North,
 you shall hear from me again, till
 then, I remain yours,

TILDA LEICESTER.

LADY STANMORE

TO

MISS WEST.

WELL, West! you see I have Offory Place.
 not forgot my word, which was to
 think of you the moment I was my
 own mistress. Thursday last, and
 a good Bishop, Heaven thank him,
 conferred this favour on me. And
 now I am going soberly to com-
 mence a good matronly wife, that
 is, when I am about eighty: not
 before. My Lord has promised to
 let me govern: a condition, with-
 out which, I never would have
 been his; and, if he keeps his
 word, I shall be very happy. He is

infinitely obliged to me, as I singled him out from a thousand admirers and, as long as he does just as I please, I shall continue to love him.

The purport of this is to say, I shall expect you to come here directly, and then to accompany me to Stanmore Castle. It will be absolutely necessary that I take some friends down with me to shew them a little what life is. Miss Leicester has been prevailed on to leave my father, not without a great deal of difficulty. I have my suspicions—but more of that hereafter: at present I have not a moment to spare, only to tell you, that I have, or rather my Lord has, got a beau for you, a brother of Lady Harley's, a good, decent looking young man,

man, I should say, if I did not know that he is a Cit transplanted to the West-end of the town. He was a school-fellow of my Lord's; therefore I *must* be civil; and, if you like, he will have two claims to my attention. I am not allowed to write a moment longer, than to subscribe myself,

HELENA STANMORE.

GEORGE BEAUCHAMP, Esq.

TO

WILLIAM OSSORY, Esq.

GIVE me leave, my old friend,
 to congratulate you on your daughter's nuptials, and your noble son-in-law. My nephew informs me, that all I have seen of Asiatic splendor is nothing to that exhibited at Ossory Place. Had I not been detained by illness here, I would have judged for myself. Edmund is just what I was at his age—take care that no pretty damsel run away with his affections that is not deserving of them; and, if you have ever a one that is: why e'en let them
 them

them court their own way; and when they are bound for the port of matrimony I'll endeavour to make the voyage a pleasant one. As soon as you have settled the new-married pair in Scotland, I will come and spend a month or two at Offory Place. I intend, as soon as I possibly can leave Bath, to spend a few weeks with Lord Harley, or rather Lady Harley, for I execrate the rascal who could force the affections of any woman. Win her and wear her shall ever be my motto. Constantia has written to entreat that I would write to Mr. Seymour, as Edmund had informed his sister that he meant to seek satisfaction from his Lordship; and that, if he should persist in this resolution, she would be

be plunged into greater misery than any she had yet experienced, or had words to describe. Tell him, therefore, said she, that it is my most earnest request that he may desist. I did so, though I most heartily wish the young fellow may not regard either her entreaties or mine, but take his just revenge. I shall expect to hear soon from you again.

Yours,

G. BEAUCHAMP.

EDMUND BEAUCHAMP, Esq.

TO

GEORGE BEAUCHAMP, Esq.

DEAR SIR,

Berwick.

TO you, who have travelled so far both by sea and land, it would be superfluous to mention the pleasure as well as the improvement which tours and voyages afford; and it might be thought impertinent, if I did not know that you will readily indulge me in giving vent to whatever impressions are made, or reflections excited in my mind, by the scenes through which I pass. I consider travelling, Sir,
with

with convenient accommodation, and in company with one's friends, as one of the very pleasanterest courses in which men of fortune can perform the journey of life. Travelling is eminently conducive to good health and spirits, excites curiosity, and gratifies it, places objects that had been familiar to us in new lights, and, by rousing and keeping the energy of the soul in exercise, enlivens those emotions of tender mutual friendship which form the sweetest cordial of life. To range freely over the face of the globe, is more noble and consentaneous to the nature of man, who loves even to step beyond the narrow bounds of this earth, and to survey the Heavens, than to remain for ever in one place, attached

tached to the soil like the cattle and the trees of the forest.

If men were possessed of the power and the leisure to set down in words the various objects, and the corresponding emotions and passions that occupy and influence the mind in different times and circumstances, they would never want an object of recollection both curious and interesting. If the unvaried and uninteresting voids of life should seem but ill adapted to the composition of such journals, travels and voyages not only furnish materials for collections of this kind, but naturally prompt us to make them. I wish it were within the compass of my ability to arrest the mixed sentiments that succeeded and combined with each other,

other, in my heart and mind, in our journey from Olfory Place through Durham, Newcastle, Morpeth and Alnwick, to this famous town, which guards the entrance into the Tweed, the natural boundary on the eastern coast of Britain between Scotland, in which it is situated, and England. At all those places, the populace, who are ever ready to enter with the most cordial sympathy into the happiness, and to pray for the prosperity of the great, received our cavalcade, which was numerous and splendid beyond any thing that had been seen in the north of England since the times of chivalry and feudal pomp, with loud and sincere acclamations of joy. The poor and hard-working people forgot,

got, for a moment, their own hardships and toils, and rejoiced that there were, at least, some of the human race exempted from the ordinary lot of human wretchedness. This sincere congratulation affected every heart; but Lord Stanmore's in an eminent degree, who, with tears in his eyes, turning to Mr. Offory on different occasions, expressed a sentiment similar to that of Adam in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, when he sees, in a vision, the miseries of his posterity, and wishes that he could share them with them, and exhaust them all himself. He ordered most liberal donations to be made, at the towns where we halted, to the poor: and, with regard to the distresses of some that were represented as beyond the reach

reach of money to alleviate them, he wished he could bear a part of them in his own person !

I shall not, at this time, waste the leisure, which an hour I have stolen from sleep and sloth affords me, by describing the beautiful inland town of Durham, formed, as it were, by the very hand of romance ; the meanders of the Weir, the gently swelling ground, the venerable air of the cathedral, and bishop's palace, which carry the imagination so many centuries back, and unite the former with the present times : neither shall I describe the extent and population of Newcastle, which you may learn from any collier in Wapping ; I cannot, however, help observing, that as we passed on from that busy and bustling

bustling place, northwards, toward Morpeth, we were all of us sensible of a change of climate. The air became more cool, keen, piercing, and elastic : an effect which may be ascribed partly to our approach to the mountains, which vary the face of Scotland and the northern parts of England, the summits of which are, for the greater part of the year, and in a few instances, always covered with snow ; and partly to our gradual advancement, in a northerly direction, beyond the island of Ireland, which being interposed between England and the Great Atlantic Ocean, contributes to modify the breezes which are wafted across that abyss from the northern and snowy regions of America. Morpeth is a pleasant
little

little town, softly embosomed in groves of trees. Alnwick is distinguished by its castle, the residence of the Percies, now Dukes of Northumberland. Alnwick castle has, externally, an air of grandeur, and, internally, as much elegance and convenience as could be united with Gothic magnificence. The country, for several miles to the north-west and to the east, is beautifully laid out into a park, and plantations of fir and other forest trees. On an elevated situation, about seven miles north and west from Alnwick, a tower has been lately built of great height, from the summit of which you have a prospect of the German ocean; and, in clear days, it is said, of Edinburgh castle. From the

the battlements of this aerial and lofty edifice, the family of Percy survey the Cheviot hills, and other scenes of the heroic exploits of their ancestors.—The place where I write these things, and the occasion of my being here, present to my imagination a striking contrast between the times to which those exploits refer, and the present. BERWICK, which has been called the divorcer of the two kingdoms, has now become a commodious bond of union and communication; and the connexion of the Ossory with the Stanmore family lead me rather to anticipate a more perfect union between the English and the Scottish nations, that to recal former divisions and contests.—By the way, Sir, I think matrimony
would

would be a mighty good sort of thing, if it served no other purpose than that of gradually abolishing antipathies among the neighbouring nations. At any rate, it would seem to be a more pleasing mode of settling disputes, than an appeal, as was the custom formerly, to fire and sword.

While I have been thus employed in unfolding to you, my dear Sir, the sentiments that are uppermost in my mind for the moment, the rest of my fellow-travellers have just returned from a walk on the ramparts, well disposed for breakfast. After this necessary refreshment we proceed on our destination. I will write to you again from the capital of Scotland, whither

ther I expect to arrive in good time to supper. Adieu, dear Sir! and be assured, that in all times and places I shall invariably remain,

Your affectionate nephew,

EDMUND BEAUCHAMP.

LORD HARLEY

TO

SIR JOHN SEABRIGHT.

I WISH I was heartily rid of these cursed shackles. What had I to do with matrimony? The first man that married was damned for it; and it has generally happened that all fools ever since have experienced the same fate. She never loved me—No! there was that young smiling coxcomb: I shall keep a strict watch on them both; and if I find her holding the slightest correspondence with the villain, I will sacrifice her to my resentment.

sentment. Since she will not accept my love, she shall experience the force of my revenge. She is not the first woman I have tamed, Seabright, you know! But she shall be the last I am determined that ever I trouble myself about. I am going again to the country to please a whim of her's. I fancy she thinks she can cheat me better there than in town, but she is mistaken. I shall leave my trusty Joseph to watch Seymour, and bring me word of his motions. He has my orders to follow him every where; and if he dares to come within sight of Harley Lodge, I shall then know how to proceed—I yesterday, in passing Lady Harley's dressing-room, heard her singing a very charming song, but the words

I do not approve for her to sing;
they were,

“ For ever fortune wilt thou prove

“ An unrelenting foe to love.”

She is continually scribbling, but I can never have a sight of the productions of her pen. I have tried every thing in the art of man to win her affections without effect. Her family, too, all seem to hate me. I wish I had given them cause for it, by taking the gold instead of the girl, who is always whimpering and whining if I expostulate with her. She complains of weak nerves, of not long remaining on this side of the grave to give me any concern, and such like stuff. I dare not go amongst my old companions: they
all

all attack me about my young wife, and look at me so significantly, that I feel all the tortures of cuckoldom by anticipation : I have but little doubt that the reality will one day be my lot.

My neighbour Offory has just married his daughter to my ward Lord Stanmore ; as I suppose you have been informed in the public papers. I was present at the ceremony, and should have accompanied them to Scotland, had not my Lady's delicacy of constitution prevented me. There is a very charming girl, companion to Lady Stanmore, who is gone down with them, that I should like infinitely ; but then there is so much trouble with these misses, who are all for the young dogs. Offory has

K 3 a month's

198 FATAL FOLLIES.

month's mind to Miss Leicester himself. Surely I might become *his* rival, but that I have a cursed clog, which he has not. Do come down here and see her, she is a beautiful piece of marble. No more, I assure you.

Yours,

HARLEY.

WILLIAM OSSORY, Esq.

TO

GEORGE BEAUCHAMP, Esq.

Edinburgh.

I Cannot wait until we arrive at the end of our journey to thank you, my old friend, for your congratulatory letter. And now, I hope, you are convinced that I have not acted wrong. My daughter has married the man of her own choice. You would not have me reject him, because he has a title, would you? There is now nothing that can go wrong whilst I remain in this world. Helena cannot fail of happiness, and I am almost mad

with joy. I have but one other wish to accomplish : that done, I shall say Will Ossory thou art a lucky fellow. As you don't approve of my project, why I shall not make you privy to any more of them.

For your nephew, I shall take care of him, but for his heart he must guard that himself, I don't like the charge : you are to give an account of your's, if you don't forget your promise. This is the first line I have written since I left London ; and as Edmund tells me, he has given you an account of our route ; why, I shall wish you a speedy recovery of your health and spirits ; and remain

Yours,

WILLIAM OSSORY.

MISS BEAUCHAMP

TO

MISS LEICESTER.

Harley Lodge.

DOUBTLESS you will be surprized when you see the place from whence this is dated. But you shall be made acquainted with the cause of our removal from town, and I doubt not but it will meet with your approbation. My brother, in a conversation which he had with Constantia, very improperly told her, that Mr. Seymour had vowed to be revenged on Lord Harley for taking her from him; which, as her nerves are extremely weak, has greatly alarmed and af-

fectured her. Whenever Lord Harley was absent from home she was in agony. Every rap at the door, she conceived, was to inform her of the dreadful event, which, should Mr. Seymour and his Lordship meet, she expected. I advised her, in order to avoid this constant alarm, to propose returning to the Lodge, her bad health being a very good reason for her wishing the air of the country. She did so, and his Lordship has complied. We arrived here yesterday. I am sorry to say, that I think it next to an impossibility that my sister should ever be happy, as Lord Harley does not possess one amiable quality, and every day displays some disagreeable trait in his character before unknown to us. It
seems

seems he expects a visitor soon, on whom he is very lavish of his encomiums; a Sir John Seabright. I do not feel any great predilection in his favour, from the circumstance of his being the particular friend of his Lordship. Strict intimacies are generally formed by some similarity of disposition; for there are many characters which we admire, and wish to imitate, yet towards which our minds do not bend with that cordiality necessary for a permanent friendship. How dreadful then must an union be where the dispositions differ so much as Lady and Lord Harley's! and where there is neither sympathy to conciliate affection, nor virtue to command esteem! I almost blame myself for joining the rest of our family

mily in intreaties to Constantia to make so dreadful a sacrifice: but since that step cannot be recalled, why! I am determined to dedicate my utmost endeavours to sooth; and, if possible, reconcile her to her fate.

It is not right to interrupt your present festivity with my melancholy epistle; yet I am sure you will forgive me. As a token of your forgiveness, write soon, and give me an account of your gaiety. The scene, being entirely new to my friend, must be an amusing one. Pray, in your next, let me know how you like Edmund. You promised him a place in your esteem, unseen; and I would not wish to hear that he has lost any thing, on a nearer acquaintance, but his heart. I should delight in hearing that
you

you are in possession of it, and believe me, I think it a treasure that every woman does not deserve. Pray tell him, that his sister and I entreat we may hear from him whilst he remains amongst you in the North. Our uncle Beauchamp is expected here in about a week. The assurance of this visit, which we received in a most affectionate letter, has, I think, raised Constantia's spirits: for he possesses one of the best hearts that ever inhabited the breast of man. He is not, indeed, without some few oddities and caprices, but these are so greatly overbalanced by his virtues, that they appear only like a stream of water perceptible when viewed by itself, but lost when it falls into the ocean. My *Lady* Mother, when in town, did not condescend to
visit

visit us often ; and when she did, it was, to enumerate Lord Harley's goodness, family, fortune, and great connexions ; and above all, his condescension in marrying my sister, and her ingratitude. My father looks ill, and, I fear, though too late, sees the folly of rendering himself and his child wretched.

I am out of spirits, and of course have wrote you a stupid letter. I shall expect a more lively answer ; and remain,

Yours,

HONORIA BEAUCHAMP.

EDMUND BEAUCHAMP, Esq.

TO

GEORGE BEAUCHAMP, Esq.

DEAR SIR,

Edinburgh.

THE gentlemen who joined our company at Berwick yesterday morning, came very opportunely for acting the part of travelling companions, or tutors, if you will, to a young Englishman on a tour into Scotland: For though Lord Stanmore is intelligent, and conversant in the history of his country, of which, like most of his countrymen, he is not a little proud, yet there is a natural taciturnity

turnity about him, which those who are not acquainted with him, mistake for the pride of his rank. Nor is he so well acquainted as a curious fellow-traveller would wish him to be with the scenes which naturally draw the attention of a stranger, having received a great part of his education in England, and spent the years that have intervened between the period of his leaving the schools and the present, in different countries on the continent.

The three strangers, though of characters, if I can judge from so short an acquaintance, sufficiently marked and distinguished from one another, appeared on our first interview to have been cast in one mould of stiffness, gravity, and for-

formality. They seemed like two Spanish gentlemen, in company with a father confessor, on a pilgrimage to the tomb of some departed saint. The formality of Mr. Graham, a gentleman of about two thousand a year in the county of Angus, seemed to arise, not from any awkward and old-fashioned stateliness of deportment, but that *fierté* of disposition which Voltaire, in some of his comedies, ascribes to the Scottish noblesse, as I am inclined to believe, not without reason, and which an education, cultivated both by books and travelling, had not been able wholly to conquer. This gentleman seemed to maintain a degree of reserve and distance, left any advance on his part, to openness and frankness,

ness, should be misinterpreted into an act of courtship to the superior wealth of Mr. Offory, or station as well as affluence of the Earl and Countess of Stanmore. The studied obsequiousness, on the other hand, of the land-steward, his profound bows, and his utter silence, except when he spoke in answer to some question, plainly announced the servility of dependance. The character, whom to my astonishment I found the most unreserved, communicative, and open in his deportment and conversation, was the clergyman. This reverend presbyter, though he came up to make his bow in the rear of the triumvirate, with a solemnity of physiognomy that seemed to announce nothing less than an act of adoration to superior beings,

beings, had no sooner performed the ceremony of welcoming Lord Stanmore to his land, and wishing all blessings on himself and family, temporal, spiritual and eternal, than he assumed great freedom of behaviour, and began to be somewhat gay and jocular in his conversation.—His inward man was clothed with the remains of a very fine person, and a lively and handsome countenance, fair, ruddy, and regularly formed. For about ten years he had triumphed over the critical period of his grand climacteric; and he seemed even at that advanced stage to think as little of the last scene, as if he had concluded the first act of life. “If the English and Scotch lords and ladies of former times,” said he,

“ had

“ had possessed the same just taste and discernment, and felicity of disposition and fortune which had fallen to the share of Lord and Lady Stanmore, there would have been no occasion for those double dykes* and ditches, which still confined the town of Berwick.—The garrison here, by the way,” continued my old gentleman, “ serves no good purpose. The rising ground adjacent would easily command the town in case of a foreign invasion; and, for internal purposes, the fewer barriers, between one part of a free country and another, the better.—I was always a great friend to the union; for, in my younger days, we had

* The Scotch term for walls.

many and warm debates about that measure, although it had been solemnly ratified by the parliaments of both countries; but the true perfection, and what I may be permitted to call the just *consummation* of the union, is a matrimonial union between individuals of different sexes, as well as nations. And I am happy, my Lord, when I have the pleasure of looking on the very elegant and charming young persons who have accompanied you hither in indulging the hopes, that in this way, our national union with the English will yet be made more and more complete. —What do you say, Mr. Graham?" looking with a smile towards Miss Leicester.

The

The CALEDONIAN Gentleman, bowing with the utmost grace and complaisance to the ladies, expressed, by mute gesture, an entire approbation of the sentiments avowed by his reverend companion.

Lord Stanmore in the mean time happening to fall, as he not unfrequently does, into a reverie, Lady Stanmore not perfectly comprehending what the Scotchman said, and Miss Leicester and Miss West being restrained from any reply to the parson's effusions from a natural delicacy, a silence took place, which the land-steward constructed into disapprobation. Under this construction he thought it good policy to make his court to the Stanmore family, by observing, that

that they were better times when some folks minded their prayers, than things in which they could be no competent judges.—In this crisis I determined to keep the poor presbyter in countenance, by an hearty concurrence with all that he said.

The company began now to rise from breakfast, and to prepare for the day's journey. And while the horses were put to the carriages, and our luggage properly disposed and fastened, Mr. Sylvester, for that was the clergyman's name, pulling me by the sleeve, beckoned me to take a turn with him by ourselves, on Berwick Bridge. "I had pleasing proof, my dear young gentleman," said this hearty old Trojan, "of that manly free-
" dom

dom which is inspired by the English constitution, but which, I am sorry to observe, has not yet made its way so thoroughly as I could wish in Scotland. That cringing old dog, Kenneth Macalpine, the factor, thought to pay his court to my Lord at my expence: but you espousing my doctrines, stood my friend. I doubt not but the ladies too were my friends in their hearts, though it was impossible for them to confess it. Mr. Graham is a fine young man, Sir, is he not? To this I most readily assented: for, in truth, more comeliness of countenance, more symmetry and manly vigour I never saw united in one person, than what combine to adorn this Caledonian, who seems to be in the 28th year of his age.—

I added,

added, in return for Mr. Sylvester's compliments, on the independent spirit of the English nation, that I was not a little pleased to find such manly sentiments and gentleman-like carriage in a Scottish clergyman, as I understood that the church livings in Scotland were but poor.—“ They are indeed,” said my companion, “ but middling: poor I cannot call them: but such as they are, they are equally divided, and a man comes generally to the top of his preferment at once, and on his first entrance on life. Now blessed are they who never hope, for they are never disappointed. It is not worth any man's while to live all his life in bondage to any great man for the chance of being preferred to

benefice, ten or twenty pounds a year richer than what he possesses. For my part, I value my liberty more than even thirty pounds a year; and that is, at least, one third part of my yearly stipend."— There is a flow of philanthropy about this old man with which I am very much taken. His heart, in the course of our conversation, seemed not only to overflow with good will to me, but to embrace the villages on either side of the Tweed, and even the very soil of the contiguous countries. He mentioned a proposal which, he said, he had to make to Lord Stanmore and all the company, of passing the whole day at Berwick and its environs, and exulting over the fallen monuments of former hostility and
bar-

barbarism. He was indulging this mood, when, as he walked on the quay of Berwick, which stretches along the northern and eastern banks of the Tweed, he was accosted by a postillion, who asked him, in the Berwick dialect, whether he was not bound for Scotland, because there was a return chaise that would carry him to Haddington, Dunbar, or as far as Edinburgh. The parson, struck with the question, whether he was not bound for Scotland, said, why! my friend, are we not on Scotch ground at this moment? The fellow affirmed that Berwick was in England; and so also said all the other natives of Berwick, who had by this time joined in the conversation. Mr. Sylvester, not a lit-

tle nettled at this mark of contempt for Scotland, within the confines of which, Berwick is really situated, dropped his intention of passing any longer time in it, and, mounting his horse, joined our cavalcade, which proceeded to Dunbar, where we dined. I insisted, after a plentiful repast, that this old gentleman should exchange situations with me. He was accordingly prevailed on to step into the coach, and I rode along with Mr. Graham and Kenneth Macalpine to Haddington, where we drank tea. In the evening we remounted our horses, and rode, at some distance behind the coaches, to Edinburgh. By the time we had come to the moor of Tranent, the scene of that action between
his

his Majesty's troops and the rebels in 1745, known by the name of the battle of Prestonpans, the declining sun, with a broad and fiery orb, hovered on the summits of a ridge of mountains, bold, abrupt and sublime. From the bosom of these issued the Forth, which, swelled by many a tributary stream from the hills that variegate the face of Scotland, flows, in a winding and long course through a fertile and highly cultivated country, into the German ocean. The city and the castle of Edinburgh, built on a congeries of hills and rocks, at the foot of an hill and rock that rise suddenly to a great height in the midst of a great plain, and not two miles from the sea, for the loftiness and grandeur of its buildings may

justly be considered as the counterpart of that country of which it is the capital. Here we all arrived in good health and spirits about ten o'clock in the evening. And I have had time to write you this long epistle while the cooks, they tell me, are dressing a *gigot of mutton* for the servants, and the *serviettes* are laid for our supper, of which, one capital dish, I am told, is to be *friar's chickens*. These circumstances, with the style of the building here, have impressed on my mind, though I have not been above two hours in this city, a lively recollection of that ancient alliance, intercourse and friendship which subsisted between Scotland and France. Adieu, my dear Sir, till our arrival at Stanmore Castle,
from

from which place I will again resume the pen.

Yours affectionately,

EDMUND BEAUCHAMP.

MISS LEICESTER

TO

MISS BEAUCHAMP.

Edinburgh.

ON our arrival last night in this city I was agreeably surprised to receive a letter from my dear Honoria. I really have not a moment to myself since we commenced our journey. If I had it should have been dedicated to you. I do not excel in descriptions, otherwise I would give you every circumstance of our route hither. All that I can say is, that we have been attended to, and stared at in every town we passed through as if

if we had been prodigies, which has not a little pleased the vanity of Mr. Offory and his daughter; who, to say the truth, has behaved tolerably well throughout the journey.

You enquire how I like your brother. Quite as well as I supposed I should, which is saying a great deal; for I had a strong predilection in his favour before we met. He is the arrantest scribbler I ever saw; and I doubt not but he is a very faithful lover, for I believe there is not a town through which we have passed from whence he has not dispatched a letter to his mistress. I take it for granted, that it is a lady to whom he writes: though, he says, that his uncle

expects to hear frequently from him; and that, as he is at present in a bad state of health, his account of our journey may serve to enliven a tedious moment. We none of us believe him: but this is a good excuse.

I think I have mentioned in some of my letters a Miss West, a school-fellow and particular friend of Lady Stanmore's. If I have not, let me now introduce you to her acquaintance, as she makes one of our party, having met us on our journey to Offory Place. She is that servile kind of creature that commends every thing done by the Great, assents to every thing they say, will laugh when they laugh, and cry when they do. She
already

already views me with a malignant eye, and looks with astonishment whenever I deviate in opinion from the rest of the company. Lady Stanmore is quite fond of her, she is so obliging, she says, and so amiable. Now this latter quality has laid dormant ever since I have had the pleasure of seeing her. We have also a trio of the strangest mortals along with us, who met us at Berwick, you ever beheld ; a proud Scotch gentleman, an old clergyman, and my Lord's land-steward : this last is of the spaniel kind, and I mortally hate him. The more I see of Lord Stanmore, the more I like him. He is more attentive to me than to Miss West, which I am sorry for, as I can see it does not please.

L. 6

I was

I was in the parlour at Berwick, before any one came from their chambers, and was soon after joined by Mr. Offory, who very kindly enquired what I thought of remaining in North Britain, and whether I did not feel any reluctance at quitting his protection. I assured him, that I now felt, and always should feel, the gratitude of a child to a parent for him, and owned, that had fate permitted, I had rather have remained in his than any other house. I consider it, I said, as my only home now; and as such, quitted it with unfeigned regret. You, who know the weakness of my disposition, will not be surprised when I tell you that I shed tears. Mr. Offory bid

bid me dry them up, assuring me that there was not any cause of grief to me that did not give equal pain to him ! And that if, as I said, I quitted his house with regret, it should be my own fault if I did not return with him to Offory Place ; and, if I chose it, remain there for the rest of his life. Your brother, just then entering, put a stop to any farther discourse. The benevolence of Mr. Offory's own heart prevents him from seeing the impropriety of my returning to his house, now Miss Offory has left it. For the offer, however, I shall for ever think myself greatly indebted. Pray remember me respectfully to Lady Harley. Tell her, I hope to see her in Scotland in good health and spirits,

spirits, for his lordship promised she should come down as soon as she was recovered.

Adieu ! my dear Honoria,

Yours,

MATILDA LEICESTER.

HENRY SEYMOUR, Esq.

TO THE

EARL OF STANMORE.

MY DEAR LORD,

Wimpole Street.

GIVE me leave to join my congratulations to the multitude of those you have already received, and to add my thanks for your kind invitation to the Castle, though at present it is impossible for me to accept of it, as I have not yet recovered a sufficient share of spirits to join so happy a party as yours. I know that you, as well as most of my other friends, will blame me for cherishing a passion that ought

to

to be dead. Had the object who first inspired it been so at this moment I should not be so wretched, as I hope I possess religion and fortitude enough to submit to Providence : but to know that she lives, loves me, and yet is married to one so totally undeserving of her ; and who, I fear, will one day use her ill for being what he forced her to be, renders my life a burden I am hardly able to bear. The wretch should ere this have felt the effects of my resentment, had not I received a letter from Mr. George Beauchamp, wherein he informs me of Constantia's requests, which ever were, and shall always remain, commands with me, that I would not attempt any explanation with Lord Harley, as I value her
future

future peace : and Heaven knows how dearly I hold every thing that can contribute but for a moment to her happiness. I know you will blame me, but I am determined to assure her of this in person ; and, after having done so, I will never more intrude upon her, but flee to some place where I can never hear her name mentioned.

Stanmore, you are not happier at present than I once hoped to be. It is true, we should not have had the splendid fortune of which you are in possession : but fortune had nothing to do with the love of Henry and Constantia ; names that now rend my heart whenever they are joined together.

But

234 FATAL FOLLIES.

But I beg your pardon, my dear friend, this is not the strain in which you should be addressed on the present happy occasion. May no moment of your lives ever suffer a diminution of your present felicity.

HENRY SEYMOUR.

P. S. Remember me to Edmund.

SIR JOHN SEABRIGHT

TO

LORD HARLEY.

YES! yes! my good Lord, I knew you would have a surfeit of matrimony very soon. You say she is a piece of marble. Had I been her husband she would by this time have turned me into the same composition. You expected gratitude, and such like stuff: I thought you had known the sex better. They are weather-cocks: you never can fix them to any one point for more than a minute. I know them all; and will, at any time

time hereafter, as heretofore, assist you in humbling their pride. Treat this nervous lady of yours with indifference, and she will then recover her spirits take my word for it. I'll come and assist you. After I have seen her I shall be a better judge. To fall in love was to be sure ridiculous enough; but to marry!—I thought you had known better. Had not my cursed affairs drove me to Ireland just at that time, I would have undertaken to cure you of your violent passion without an old formal parson. However, as it is, we must attend to the old proverb—"Of a bad bargain make the best." I have been near matrimony myself since we last met: not on your plan, but

but one much more solid ; a forty thousand pounder, My Lord ! The gold captivated me : but what was cursedly unlucky, the Lady's brother came from the Continent, and these fellows always make themselves inquisitive in order to shew their consequence. He had the impudence to inquire into my rent-roll, and you know that would not bear a narrow inspection. I was obliged to quarrel with the girl in order to avoid her brother's questions, and so came off with flying colours. Am not I a clever fellow ?—I shall be with you in about a fortnight, but at present we have a pigeon in town, and I must have my share of his plumage. I wish you would send me a draught for
a hun-

a hundred, as I am out of cash.
 We will settle when we meet.
 Adieu, my dear Lord. . You know
 you may at all times command,

Yours,

J. SEABRIGHT.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

4 DE 58